

Aida

1983

Saturday, June 2, 1984 8:00 PM

Wednesday, June 6, 1984 8:00 PM

Sunday, June 10, 1984 2:00 PM

Friday, June 15, 1984 8:00 PM

Wednesday, June 20, 1984 7:30 PM

Saturday, June 23, 1984 8:00 PM

Wednesday, June 27, 1984 8:00 PM

Saturday, June 30, 1984 8:00 PM

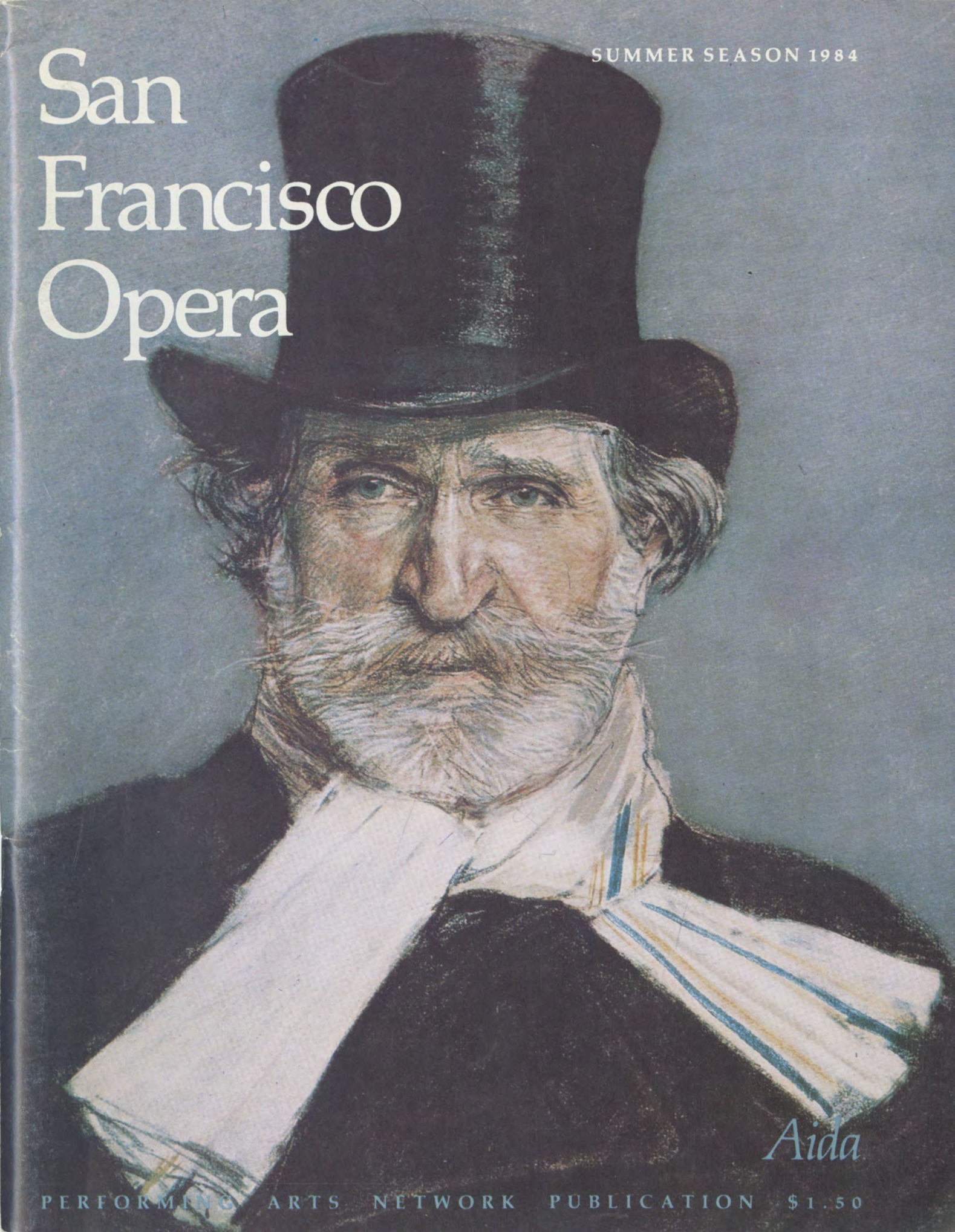
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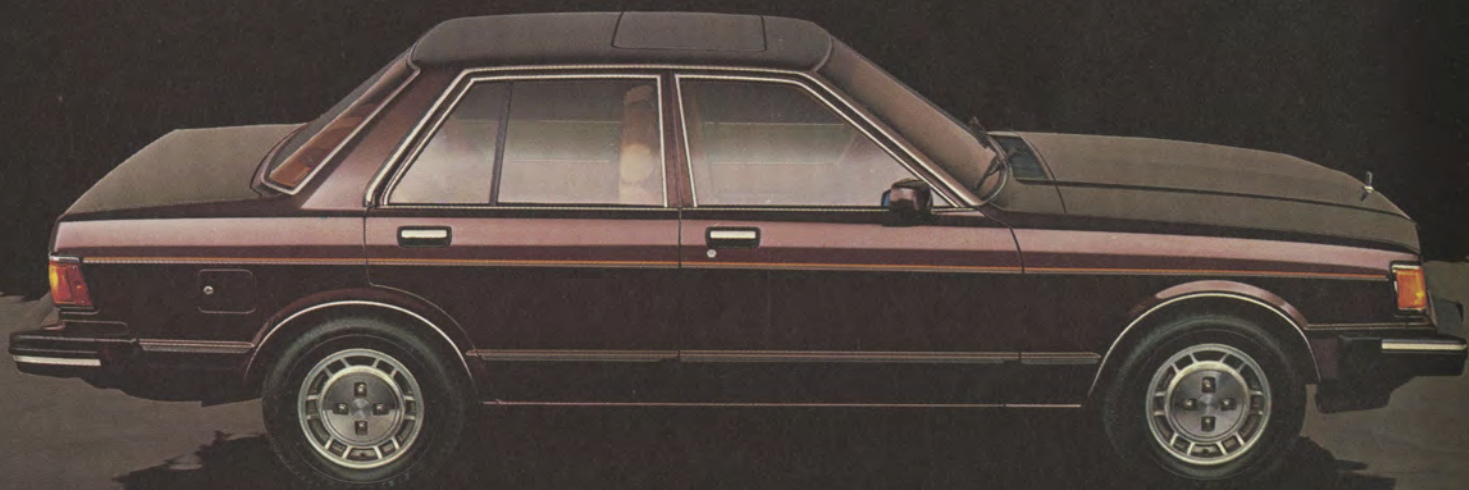
San Francisco Opera

SUMMER SEASON 1984



Aida

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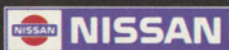
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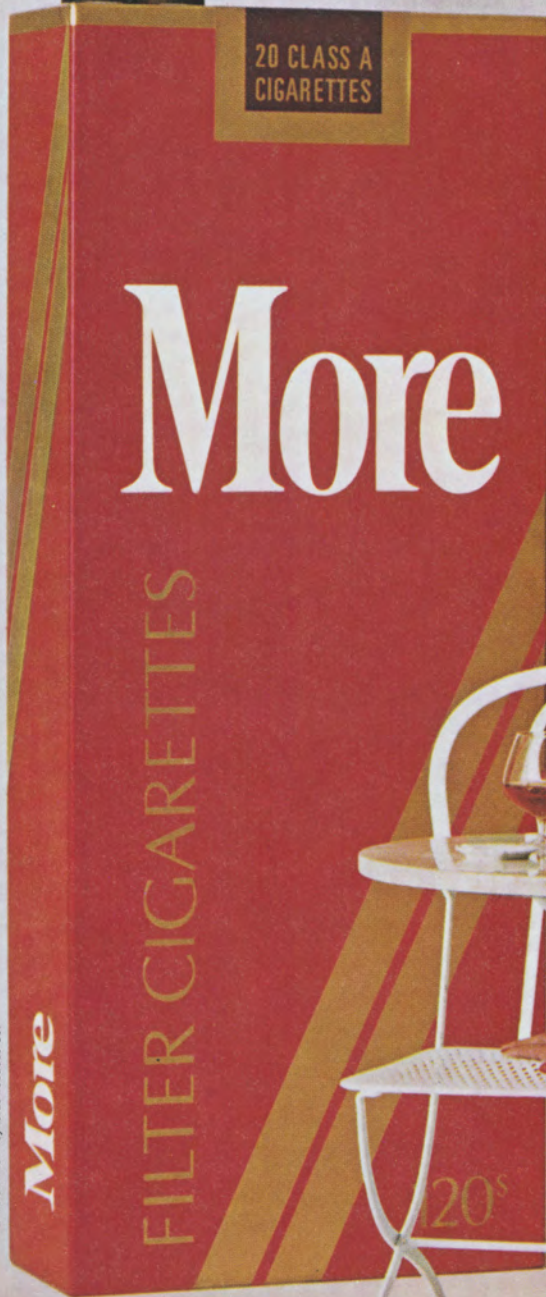
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AIDA

SUMMER SEASON 1984

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COVER: Verdi portrait by G. Boldini, made in Paris in 1886. Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Rome.

Proceeds from the sale of this magazine benefit the San Francisco Opera.

Editor: Koraljka Lockhart

Art director: Frank Benson

Editorial assistants: Robert M. Robb, John Schauer

Editorial offices: San Francisco Opera, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA 94102

Telephone: (415) 861-4008

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Summer Season 1984

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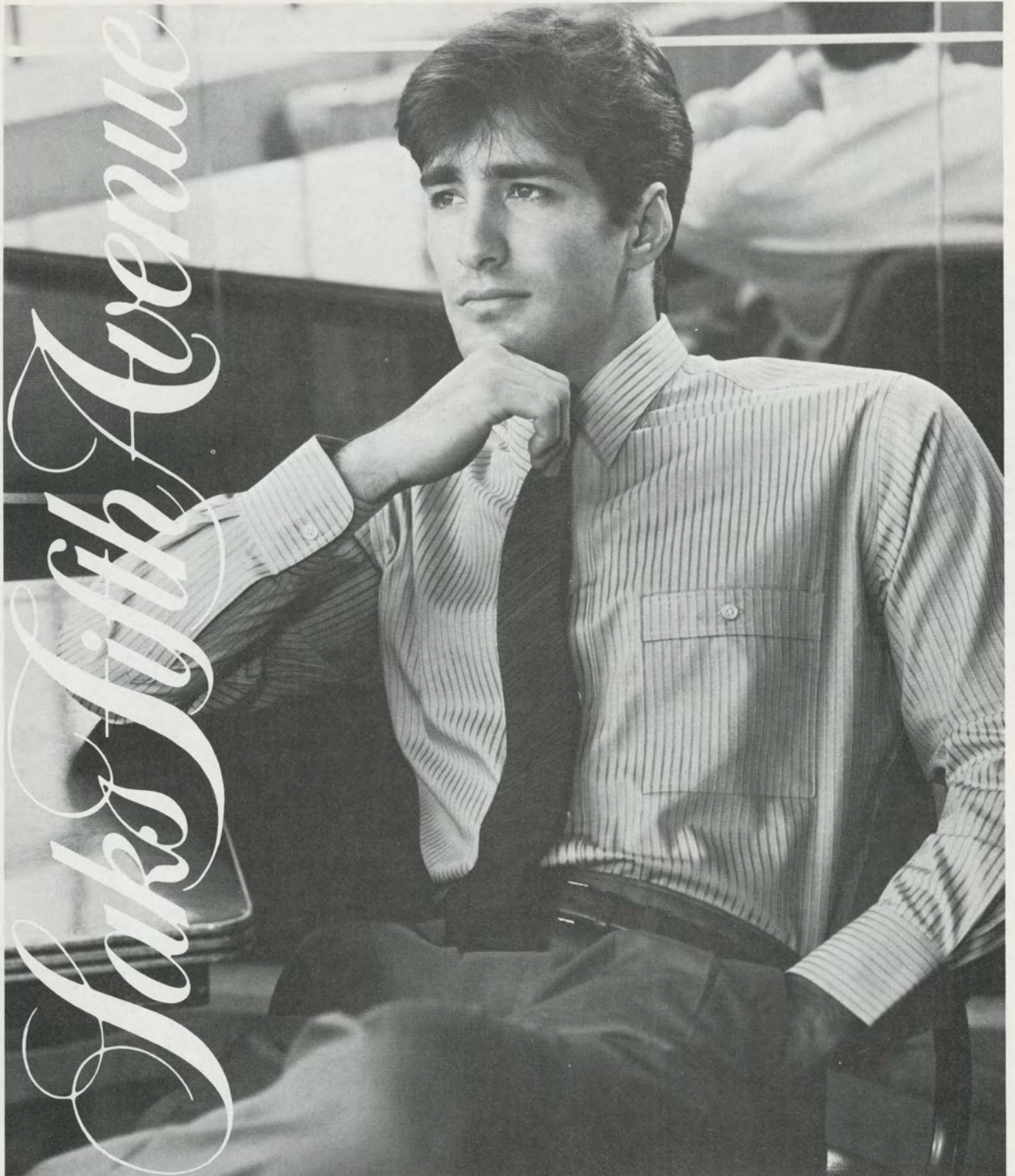
We are exceedingly gratified to observe that our Summer Season, currently in its fourth year, has become a firmly established and significant element in the spectrum of offerings from San Francisco's major performing arts organizations. Attendance at last year's summer opera performances was on a level with that enjoyed by our Fall Season, and we anticipate that this year's response will be as great. To have accomplished this within just a few years is a ringing affirmation of our belief that San Francisco wants, deserves and is willing to support the best opera that can be produced today.

Our marketing studies show us that our Summer Season audience is not the same as our Fall Season audience, a fact from which we may draw two encouraging conclusions: one, that we are not merely giving more performances, but are reaching many more people; and two, that our new audience gives us an extended base of support.

We are especially heartened by the spirit of generosity reflected in the production funding behind some of this summer's offerings. Our *Aida* production, for instance, was made possible by a gift from an anonymous friend of San Francisco Opera in 1981. The Koret Foundation has kindly underwritten the cost of reviving our production of *Don Pasquale* this summer. And very special thanks indeed are due the anonymous friend of San Francisco Opera who has elected to cover the costs of the third installment of our beautiful new Ring cycle, *Siegfried*. This magnificent gesture has given us more than a new opera production; it has enabled our Company to maintain its position among that elite group of opera companies that have been entrusted with perpetuating the highest international standards.

It is an awesome responsibility, and the presentation of our Summer Seasons has taken its toll financially. Grand opera is by far the most expensive of the performing arts; ticket sales cover only 50 to 55 per cent of our expenses. For many years prior to 1981, when we had only the Fall Season to produce, we essentially broke even thanks to the generosity of our patrons and other revenue sources. The fiscal impact of increasing the number of operas produced annually by 50 per cent—about a one-third increase in the number of performances—is obvious. During each of the last three years we have suffered significant losses, a situation we can no longer afford. We are confident that we run a tight ship, so the answer is not simply to reduce expenses; to maintain the quality for which we are known world-wide means we must increase contributions from our patrons, particularly our newer ones. If you are now a contributor, we thank you and hope you will do your best to increase your gifts. If you are not a contributor, won't you please join the thousands of our present contributors with a meaningful donation? We must have your help if we are to bring you the opera you want.

The assistance of a large number of groups and individuals has become a vital factor in our ongoing success, and we would like to thank them: the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Chief Administrator Roger Boas, the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Opera Guild, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees. Our gratitude for their indispensable assistance is most deeply felt. —WALTER M. BAIRD



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General Director's Message

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 1984 Summer Season. This year's summer offerings are marked by two developments adding special significance to what should be a fascinating season. One of these is the unveiling of the third opera in our new production of Wagner's monumental *Ring of the Nibelung*. Mounting a production of *Siegfried* alone would be an enormous undertaking; presented as part of a complete new *Ring* cycle, it is a herculean and yet most welcome task. Being involved with an artistic endeavor of this magnitude is a thrill we all shared last summer when we began our *Ring* with *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. The depth and breadth of coverage we received from national and international media confirm the scope of our enterprise. The well-deserved success earned by the countless individuals involved on all levels of our Company—our team—is something in which we take great pride.

When the curtain goes up on our new *Siegfried* production, there will be at least

two heroes to applaud: one of them is the on-stage son of the Wälsung twins whose name identifies the opera; the second is the off-stage anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera who has enabled us to continue bringing Wagner's timeless epic to life on our stage. Such generosity deserves recognition we can never adequately bestow on one whose modesty has requested anonymity.

Another major new development for our international seasons is the use of supertitles in our regular, subscription performances. The striking effectiveness of this technique for enriching one's enjoyment of opera as total theater cannot be appreciated until you have attended a supertitled performance yourself. It is my experience that even seasoned operaphiles attending standard repertory works are surprised by the degree to which their comprehension is enhanced by this deceptively simple device. It is certain to be a boon to the understanding of many members of the San Francisco

Opera audience, novices as well as connoisseurs. We owe a round of thanks to Francesca Zambello and Jerry Sherk for implementing and developing a system whose unobtrusive efficiency belies the sophistication and skill required for its realization. We are also indebted to the San Francisco Opera Guild, whose generous support has made the production of supertitles possible.

Finally let me welcome the long list of stellar artists who are performing here this summer, exciting newcomers as well as beloved veterans. Some of them will be appearing in roles new to them, others in roles with which they have become closely identified. Each one of them offers his or her unique gifts as part of this promising new season. It is a privilege to be able to share such excitement with you.

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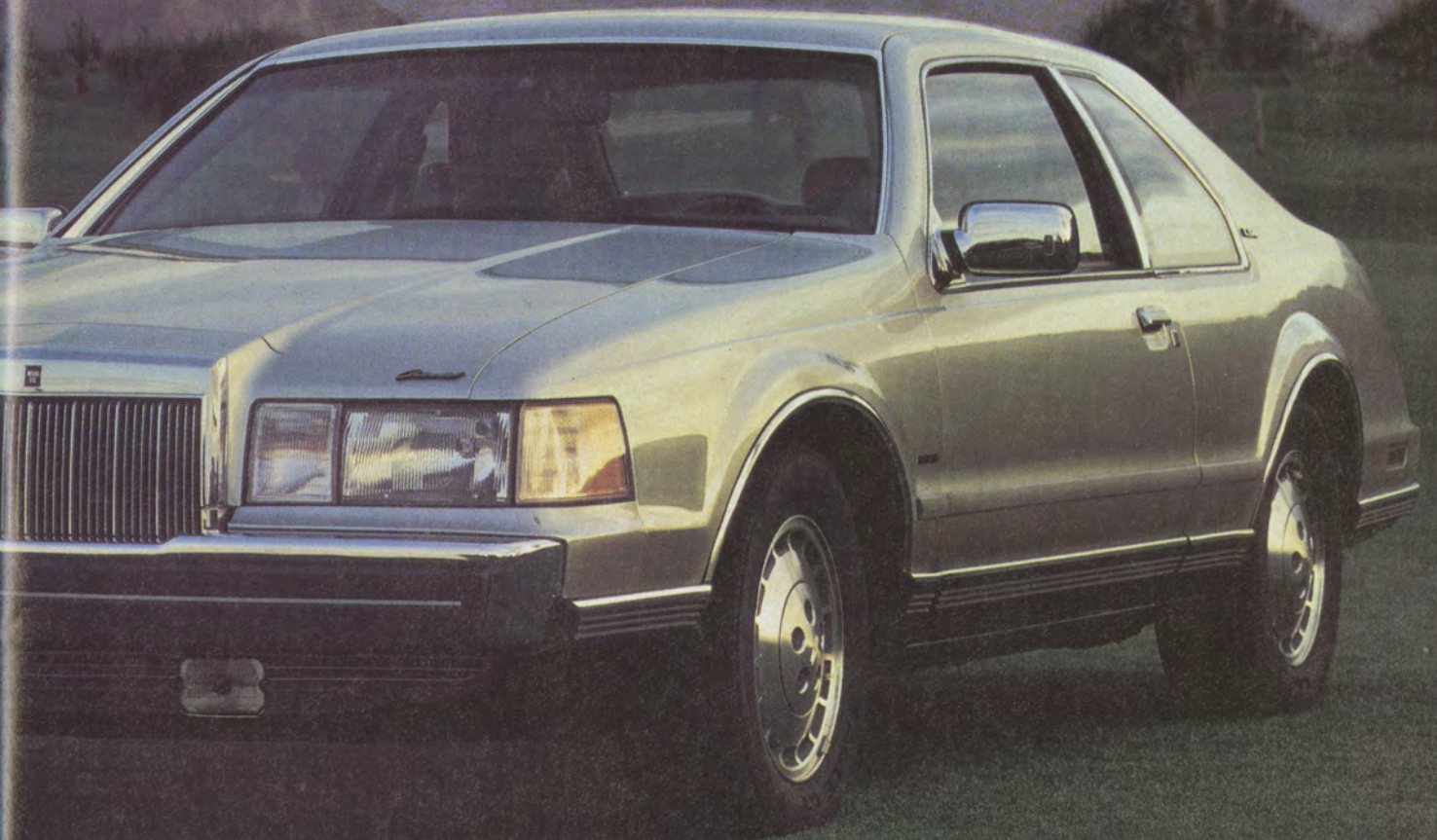
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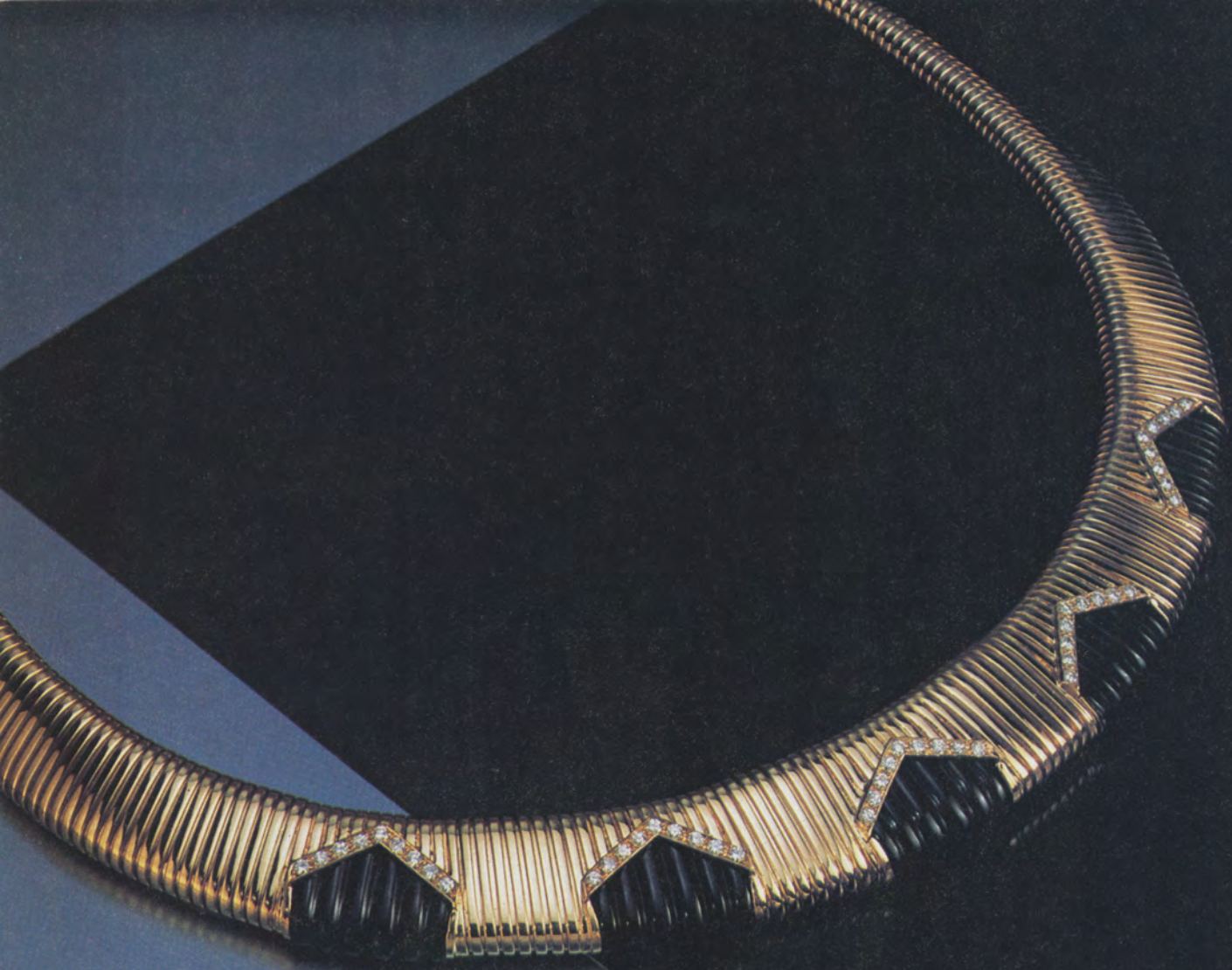
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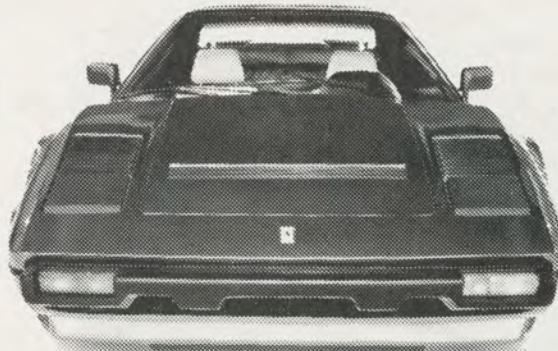
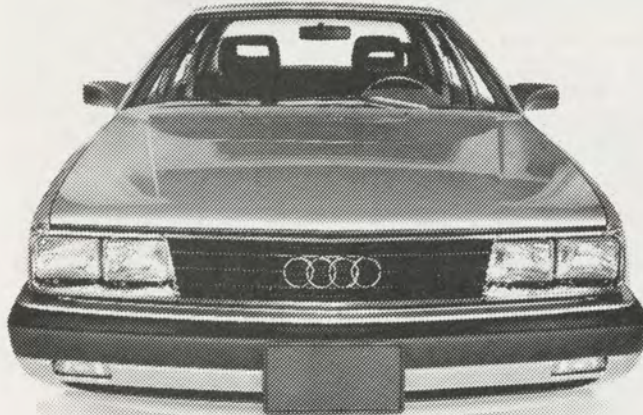
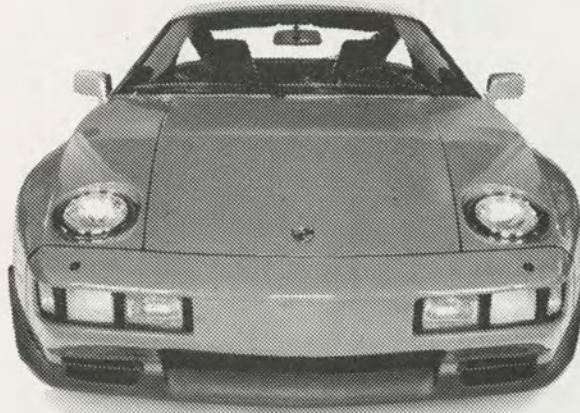
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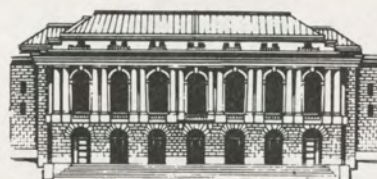
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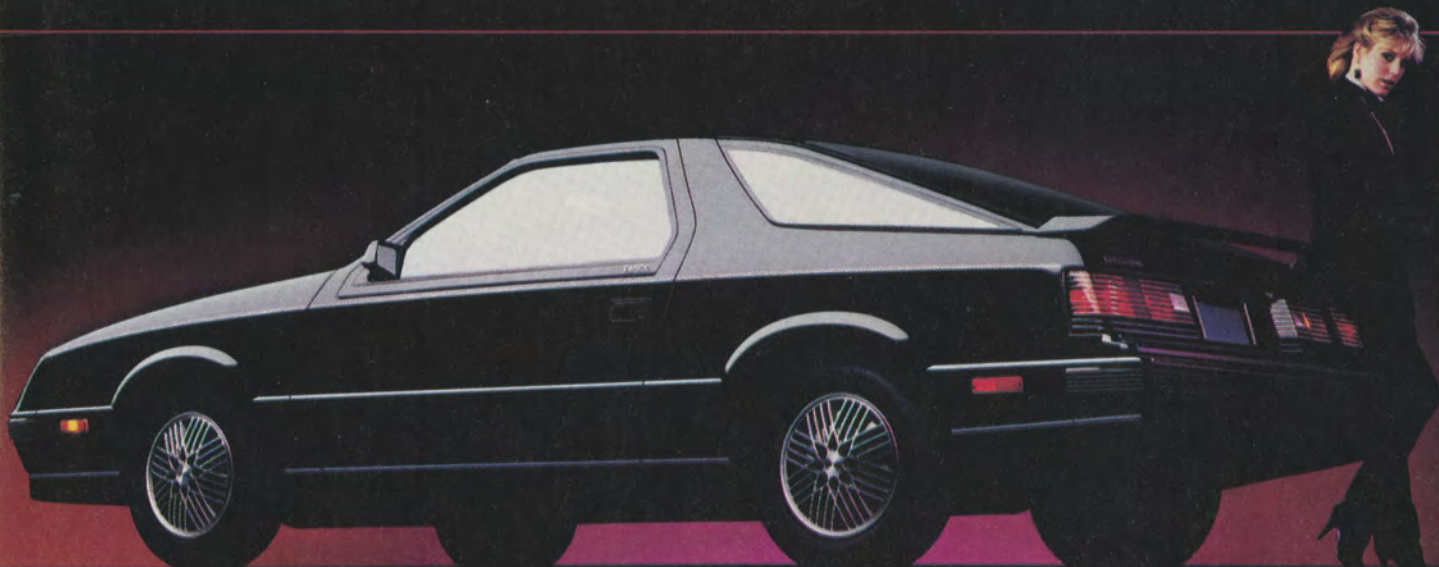
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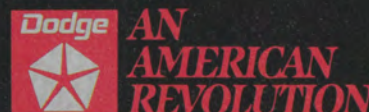


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Don Pasquale Donizetti

Soviero/Montarsolo, Araiza, Elvira, Malis*
Ajmone-Marsan*/Montarsolo/Conklin/Munn

Saturday, May 26, 7:00 New Production

Siegfried Wagner

The production of *Siegfried* has been made possible by a generous gift from an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera. The production of San Francisco Opera's new *Ring* has been partially underwritten by generous three-year grants from the Sells Foundation and BankAmerica Foundation.

Marton, Dernesch, Parrish/Kollo*, Stewart, Pampuch** (May 26, 31; June 3), Egerton (June 8, 12), Patterson, Wexler
de Waart/Lehnhoff/Conklin/Munn

Sunday, May 27, 2:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Thursday, May 31, 7:00

Siegfried Wagner

Friday, June 1, 8:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Saturday, June 2, 8:00

Aida Verdi

This production was made possible in 1981 through the generous sponsorship of an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera.

L. Price (June 2, 6, 10, 15), Evstatieva* (June 20, 23, 27, 30), Baldani, Zajic*/Bonisolli, Pons, Langan (June 2, 6, 10), Tomlinson (June 15, 20, 23, 27, 30), Patterson, Harper*
de Waart/Donnell*/Schmidt/Casey/Munn

Sunday, June 3, 1:00

Siegfried Wagner

Wednesday, June 6, 8:00

Aida Verdi

Thursday, June 7, 7:30

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Friday, June 8, 7:00

Siegfried Wagner

Saturday, June 9, 8:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Sunday, June 10, 2:00

Aida Verdi

Monday, June 11, 8:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Tuesday, June 12, 7:00

Siegfried Wagner

Friday, June 15, 8:00

Aida Verdi

Saturday, June 16, 8:00

Die Fledermaus J. Strauss

Barstow, Sasson*, Dernesch/Hofmann, Ulfung, Devlin, Langan, Kelley, Rose*
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Tuesday, June 19, 8:00

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Wednesday, June 20, 7:30

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Friday, June 22, 8:00

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Saturday, June 23, 8:00

Aida Verdi

Sunday, June 24, 2:00

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Tuesday, June 26, 8:00

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Saturday, June 30, 8:00

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Sunday, July 1, 2:00

Die Fledermaus J. Strauss

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Of *Aida's* Gods and Symbols

By JOHN SCHAUER



Considered a son of the sun, the pharaoh identified himself with the god Horus, a concept represented by this statue of the Pharaoh Khephren. Sun-associated deities were frequently symbolized by hawk imagery.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, the human race has been fascinated with the culture of ancient Egypt—which is basically to say with the religion of ancient Egypt, since most of the artifacts and literature that survive were connected in some way with religious beliefs. Even before the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 provided the key to deciphering the puzzling picture-writing that so profusely covers most Egyptian artifacts, the beautiful and strikingly stylized representations of the mythical figures of Egypt intrigued the world.

Today we still lack any significant body of contemporary historical texts and must rely upon the copious artistic representations of events and concepts as our primary source of information on that bygone era. It has been said that one can judge a civilization by the art it produces; in the case of Egypt, that is almost all we have to go on. For this reason, the designs for an opera set in Egypt, as is *Aida*, must incorporate large numbers of religious symbols if it is to evoke the feeling of that culture. There are several specific references to gods and other religious elements in the libretto, but the designer essentially has three thousand years' worth of powerful imagery to work with and select from.

(It is difficult to pinpoint the time during which the events of *Aida* take place. The libretto says merely "during the time of the pharaohs," which leaves us with the whole of Egyptian history from roughly 2920 B.C. to 30 B.C. Some of the

internal evidence of the plot suggests the time of the 18th or 19th dynasties, somewhere between 1479 B.C. and 1196 B.C., but other elements of the libretto are contradictory. Whatever Verdi's intentions were, one can best approach *Aida* as depicting a hybrid, the most picturesque of all possible Egypts.)

When dealing with the religion of ancient Egypt, we are faced with the problem that there has never been a clearly defined roster of divinities, as we have in the cases of Greece and Rome. The history of the Nile Valley affected the religion of its inhabitants as much as the religion affected history, and religious concepts seem to have been amazingly malleable. During the earliest period of civilization in the Nile Valley, that time we call predynastic (prior to 3000 B.C.), it is most likely that every tribe or village had its own protective deity. As the influence of any group of people spread over their neighbors, so did their god or goddess assume supremacy over that of other locales. The Egyptians were shrewd enough to realize that it was more effective to assimilate another religion than try to stamp it out, and several methods were used. The god of the dominant group could simply assume the qualities of another god as his own, in addition to those he already possessed; the new god could be worked into the established order but placed in a subordinate role to the primary god; or, in the process called syncretism, the Egyptians would identify two or more gods as one, retaining multi-



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ple names, with little effort made to rationalize the resulting inconsistencies, which they seemed to regard as merely different aspects or interpretations of the same principle.

The gradual unification of the Nile Valley continued until all of the area we now consider ancient Egypt was divided into two areas—or at least that is how the Egyptians themselves viewed their prehistoric past; some modern scholars question whether this division was real or only a concept perpetuated for philosophical reasons. At any rate, the two areas retained their designations throughout history as Upper Egypt (the southern portion) and Lower Egypt (primarily the area of the Nile Delta—this confusing terminology resulted from the fact that the Nile flows from south to north; hence one must travel south to go “up” the Nile). The first king or pharaoh recorded by the Egyptians, Menes, was not only credited with being the first to unite the two lands, but was also regarded as the founder of Memphis, which became the capital of the country during the time when the pyramids were built and is where *Aida* opens.

Verdi’s librettist, Antonio Ghislanzoni, gives us a nice touch of authenticity by setting several scenes of the opera in the temple of Ptah (spelled Fthà in Italian) in Memphis. Ptah was the principal deity of Memphis, and the remnants of his temple there form the most noticeable feature of the remains of the city. Though his pre-eminence was eclipsed by the cult of Amen (also spelled Amon or Amun—there were no vowels in written Egyptian) in Thebes after that city became the Egyptian capital around the time of the 17th dynasty (roughly 1640 B.C.—1550 B.C.), he nonetheless remained an important state god and was particularly venerated by Rameses II. King Tutankhamen moved the capital of Egypt back to Memphis during his brief 10-year reign beginning in 1333 B.C., and it is not surprising that magnificently wrought images of Ptah were included in the astonishing treasure-trove discovered in his tomb.

The depiction of Ptah in the production of *Aida* designed for San Francisco Opera



During dynastic times, the god Ptah (Fthà in Italian) was portrayed in human form, like this figure found in the tomb of Tutankhamen.

by Douglas Schmidt is frankly fanciful for dramatic purposes. In an interview in the program magazine from 1981, when the production was unveiled, Schmidt admitted, “It was virtually impossible to find a warlike demeanor on any statuary from any of the Egyptian periods for the god Fthah . . . all the Egyptian statues just sit there and smile benignly.” Thus Schmidt designed an appropriately ominous image, a fierce-looking ram-headed idol. In actuality, Ptah was one of the most benign-looking of all Egyptian deities during the

continued on p.56

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Aida- “One of my least bad operas . . .”

By ANDREW PORTER

The Suez Canal opened in November 1869 amid celebrations; on November 17 a procession of vessels headed by the *Aigle* with the Empress Eugénie on board embarked on the first passage of the new waterway. On the first of that month, Cairo had opened its new Opera House with a performance of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, conducted by his former pupil Emanuele Muzio. Verdi had been invited to compose a hymn for the inauguration but had declined "both because of my numerous current tasks and because I am not accustomed to compose *pièces d'occasion*." (In the fifth edition of Grove's Dictionary, under "National Anthems," there appears the opening measures of a march attributed to Verdi and "until recently played . . . as Egypt's national anthem," but no evidence linking the piece with Verdi has come to light.) Verdi was then invited to compose an opera for the following Cairo season, naming his own terms. He said "no"; and "no" again; and then "maybe" when, in

Andrew Porter, music critic of The New Yorker, is also one of today's foremost opera translators. The San Francisco Opera has performed two of his Mozart translations, The Magic Flute and Figaro's Wedding.

Part of the Triumphal March scene in San Francisco Opera's 1981 staging of *Aida*.

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May 1870, his imagination was fired by reading a synopsis of an opera on an Egyptian subject which he found "well made, splendid from a scenic point of view, and containing two or three situations that, while not exactly novel, are certainly very fine." He said "yes" at last when the terms that he proposed were readily agreed on: 150,000 francs (three times what he had received for his previous opera, *Don Carlos*), payable at Rothschild's Bank in Paris on delivery of the score, for the Egyptian rights alone; a Cairo performance, under a conductor he approved, in January 1871; no need for him to go to Cairo himself to supervise rehearsals; and all other rights in the opera to remain his.

The terms were handsome, but at this date Verdi was not a man to undertake commissions just for money (though the money had to be right before he would consider them); a commission had to correspond to some inner need of his. Knowing *Aida*, we can begin to guess what the inner inducement was. It had been a disappointing decade for him. In 1858, *Un Ballo in Maschera* fell foul of the Neapolitan censors (and Verdi never again accepted a commission from an Italian theater). In 1861, for St. Petersburg, he composed his largest and most ambitious opera to date, *La Forza del Destino*; wherever it was done, it was criticized for awkwardness and unwieldiness, and Verdi's acceptance of the criticism as just is evidenced by his own revision of the piece, long pondered, and finally effected in 1868. In 1863, Arrigo Boito, prominent in the new Milanese intellectual circles, published his ode *All'arte italiana*, in which he expressed the hope that Italian music, debased since "the holy days of Pergolesi and Marcello," might be cleansed by a new generation of composers: "Perhaps the man is already born who will elevate chaste, pure art on that altar now soiled like the wall of a brothel." Verdi, Italy's leading composer, not unnaturally, took this as a personal affront to him and his achievements, and for many years it rankled. Also in 1863, he supervised a revival of *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* at the Paris Opéra; the orchestra was insubordinate

and insulting; the opera was tepidly received. Verdi had with difficulty been induced to attend the first performance, and he left Paris immediately after.

In 1864, Boito wrote that Meyerbeer's works "had caused Italian operas to collapse by the hundreds, like the bricks of Jericho." In 1864-65, Verdi undertook a careful revision of that opera especially dear to him, *Macbeth*, for the Théâtre-Lyrique in Paris. It was put on with scenic splendor, in deliberate rivalry to the Opéra's 1865 novelty, Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*; but it was the Meyerbeer work that won acclaim. In 1867, he made another attempt to conquer Paris, with *Don Carlos*

yearning to retire, which he had voiced so often from 1845 on, disappear from his letters. In 1868-69 he was in busy correspondence with Camille Du Locle, the principal librettist of *Don Carlos* and now director of the Opéra-Comique, about the possibility of composing a work for that theater. There were discussions with Sardou. A *Nero* was considered. So was Molière's *Tartuffe*, if a scenario copied out in Verdi's hand and still at Sant'Agata does indeed date from this period. A *Froufrou* by Meilhac and Halévy (the librettists of Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*, *Barbe-Bleue*, *La Vie Parisienne*, etc.), which he had already considered back in 1869, was



Interior of the Cairo Opera House, the site of the first performance of *Aida* in 1871. The house opened in 1869 with Verdi's *Rigoletto*; it burned down in 1972.

at the Opéra. It was less than a triumph. The tale of disappointments is interrupted by the success at La Scala in 1869 of the revised *Forza*, and this brought about the rapprochement of the composer and Italy's leading opera house; for a quarter-century he had stubbornly refused to have anything to do with La Scala, ever since *Giovanna d'Arco* in 1845. But later that year came the collapse of the collaborative "Rossini Requiem" that Verdi had conceived and for which he had composed the "Libera me."

Nevertheless, he was eager to start composing again. The expressions of a

found "distinguished and original" for three acts but "commonplace" in the next two. Scribe's *Adrienne Lecouvreur* attracted his attention among a batch of plays Du Locle dispatched to Sant'Agata. But nothing was quite right. Nothing elicited that instant, excited response which Verdi once described as: "That's it! That's the one! To work at once!" If the opera was to be serious, then he wanted "an original creation such as, for example, *Fidès* in *Le Prophète* or *Valentine* in *Les Huguenots*." (The Meyerbeer references are significant; in the discussions that led eventually to *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, and those that led

later to *Don Carlos*, Verdi repeatedly demanded situations as "original" as the coronation scene in *Le Prophète*.) But, it seems, what he really wanted to tackle now was an opera comique on a subject that would be slightly *comique*. What turned up instead was the Egyptian invitation and the *Aida* scenario. And Verdi decided once again to tackle grand opera.

In April 1870, Auguste Mariette, a distinguished Egyptologist in the Viceroy (or Khedive) of Egypt's service, sent Du Locle a 23-page printed copy of an *Aida* scenario he had written. (In Cairo, he explained, typesetting was much cheaper than copying, so he had four copies printed.) The Viceroy, he declared, had read and approved his work and was eager for an opera on the subject by Verdi. If Verdi refused, then Gounod would be more than acceptable; and if Gounod refused, then Wagner should be approached, for he "could do something really grand." In May, Du Locle forwarded the scenario to Verdi, saying he'd been sent it by the Viceroy, and enclosed Mariette's letter with its remark about Wagner. Verdi acknowledged the scenario with the approving comment already quoted, and continued, "But who did it? There's a very expert hand in it, one accustomed to writing and one who knows the theater well". With something less than candor, Du Locle replied, "The Egyptian libretto is the work of the Viceroy and of Mariette Bey, the famous archaeologist." Verdi (in letters of the time to Giulio Ricordi) expressed his frank disbelief in the Viceregal authorship. But much later, in 1891, when Mariette's son made a claim for a share in the copyright, he wrote to Du Locle (either with an equal lack of candor or with the selectively faulty memory that marks more than one of his utterances), "I'm astounded . . . I think you yourself will remember that you sent me those few little pages printed without any author's name; you told me that the Viceroy would like an opera on that subject because it's an Egyptian one, and I supposed that the author of those pages was the Viceroy himself. All that I knew about Mariette Bey was that he had been commissioned

to look after the costumes, etc." Following a suggestion of Julian Budden, I translate "Quattro piccole paginette" as "few (not four) little pages"—a regular Italian usage. The pamphlet disappeared from view, and Verdi's "quattro" was taken literally until in 1976 Jean Humbert turned up a copy in the Opéra library, and it proved to have 23 pages.

Who should be given chief credit for the *Aida* text? The Cairo libretto said simply "Parole di A. Ghislanzoni," and Italian librettos say "Versi di A. Ghislanzoni," without mention of Mariette or Du Locle. But French librettos say "Paroles françaises de D. du Locle et Ch. Nuitter," without mention of Ghislanzoni. Mariette

VERDI NELLE IMMAGINI, 1941
COURTESY, LIM M. LAI



Antonietta Pozzoni Anastasi, who created the title role in *Aida* at Cairo in 1871.

declared that "*Aida* is in effect a product of my toil . . . In a word, it sprang from my brain." His scenario was translated into Italian by Verdi and his wife Giuseppina. (Acts I and II are in his hand, Acts III and IV in hers.) In June 1870, Du Locle visited Sant'Agata, and with Verdi he elaborated Mariette's scenario into a lengthy draft, part dialogue and part synopsis, of a libretto. He later claimed that he "wrote out in French, not just the scenario but the whole work, number by number, speech by speech." But he exaggerated; his draft survives to prove it. Some scenes are merely

sketched, although in others his French prose is fairly close to the Italian verse of the final version. The draft peters out at the end of Act III (and then in a version very different from the completed opera). Act IV survives in a draft libretto in Verdi's hand. It is plain that after Du Locle's departure Verdi reworked the libretto. Then it was sent to Antonio Ghislanzoni—the poet with whom Verdi had collaborated on the revision of *Forza*, and the editor of Ricordi's house magazine, *La Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, and in effect Ricordi's house librettist—to be versified.

Aida is a work of consolidation. In his 1956 study *Opera as Drama*, Joseph Kerman calls it "a special case"; finds "an almost constant disparity between the particular glib simplicity of the libretto and the alarming complexity of the musical expression—for, of course, Verdi's technique had never been so rich"; and deplores "a curious falsity about *Aida* which is quite unlike Verdi" (whose aim was ever "truth") and which suggests Meyerbeer even more insistently than does the Meyerbeerian panoply of triumphs and brass bands. A quarter-century later, Professor Kerman might perhaps put it somewhat differently, but he voices a reservation about *Aida* that troubled some listeners of the 1870s who knew *Don Carlos*, and that again troubles some listeners in our day when *Don Carlos* has taken its place among the greatest of Verdi's operas. After the Scala premiere, in 1872, the leading Italian critic, Filippo Filippi, detected in *Aida* "a strange duality, or rather conflict" between, on the one hand, "the ideas, the principles, the tendencies, and even the scientific procedures of the new school (to deny that Verdi has been influenced by Gounod, Meyerbeer, and Richard Wagner is like denying light to the sun)" and, on the other hand, the composer's "huge affection for his own past." Whereas as in *Don Carlos* Filippi had found "a very happy fusion," in *Aida* he detected "strangely abrupt transitions between styles."

A related charge sometimes brought against *Aida* is that the characters, with the partial exception of Amneris, lack

human interest and individuality—that they are stereotypes who have trod the operatic boards for centuries. As Julian Budden puts it, Radames, Aida and Amonasro are unparticularized representations of “heroic idealism, suffering and loving womanhood, and wily primitive ferocity.” And Budden goes on to suggest yet another reason for *Aida*’s having in modern times lost some ground in critical favor to *Don Carlos*: “In *Aida*, state authority is never called into question, except by Amneris”—and by her only on personal grounds, when it has (quite fairly and reasonably) condemned to death the man she loves. *Don Carlos* was filled with noble expressions of elevated political idealism, heroic resolution, profound self-questioning, and ponderings of responsibility. One is ever aware that the fates of three nations depend on the decisions of their rulers, and the choruses are active participants in the drama. The *Aida* choruses, while very important, are closer to being part of the strongly colored background against which the principals play out their personal drama. Of course, it does matter to the Egyptians and the Ethiopians which side wins. But the focus of the opera is never shifted decisively onto them, as in *Don Carlos* it is onto the French, the Flemings, and the Spaniards—onto the people whose lives are affected by the principals’ actions. Amonasro speaks eloquently of his subjects’ suffering, but whether he is a warmonger or a freedom-fighter is never made quite clear; the rights and wrongs of the Ethiopian invasion are not the opera’s concern. *Aida* is pretty well without explicit political content. (Verdi could not have foreseen the day when Mussolini’s fascist forces would invade *Aida*’s homeland, and the Triumphal Scene would take on overtones intolerable to liberal consciences.) Amneris’s imprecation on the priesthood is a tremendous passionate outburst, but it is that of a woman who has lost the man she longs for, and is not to be compared with the chilling, tremendous indictment of the Church that forms the somber background of *Don Carlos*. And so *Aida* can both disappoint those who—like Tchaikovsky—cannot “identify” with the stock



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characters (they are likely to be more readily moved by *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*) and disturb those who find that *Ballo, Forza*, and *Don Carlos* deal with serious and still "relevant" matters in a way that *Aida* does not.

What drew Verdi to the subject? The attractions were, I think, varied but, in the literal sense of the word, intricate. Since at least 1850, Verdi had wanted to beat Meyerbeer at his own game—to produce something large, long, and spectacular that would both draw the crowds and unite the Meyerbeer "devices" that Verdi genuinely admired to loftier subject matter and more "honest" music. (One might describe his aim as "effects with causes.") In *Vèpres* he compromised. In *Forza* and *Don Carlos* he aimed so high that the results were unwieldy; the operas were impracticably large, and neither of them in its original form was truly successful. The success of the revised *Forza* in 1869 restored his confidence, and in several letters he refers to that Scala production as being his first move in a campaign to reform Italian theaters and to provide a new, higher idea of what lyric drama in Italy might be. In writing *Forza* and *Don Carlos* he had acquired a mastery of new forms and of new sounds. He was—and he must have known he was—a greater composer than Meyerbeer or Gounod, men who had nevertheless caught the ear of the public as he in his latest works had been unable to do. He knew about Wagner and knew some of his music. He admired it—with reservations. And he resented the eager northward glances of the young Italian enthusiasts. Massimo Mila is surely right to link the abandoned *Aida* overture, with its contrapuntal combinations of themes, and the *Meistersinger* prelude. "We Italians can also do that sort of thing, should we want to" is what it seems to say. But they couldn't; and after trying out the overture in rehearsal, in Milan, Verdi abandoned it as a work of "pretentious silliness." So it is, in relation to the masterly opera it was meant to introduce.

The *Aida* synopsis arrived. It offered something scenically spectacular. It was tractable, "musicable," practicable, shapely. It lay well within, and was apt for the



Teresa Stolz, the first protagonist of *Aida* at Milan's La Scala in 1872.

exercise of, Verdi's new powers and offered much scope for their development. It gave him a chance to concentrate on dramatic music—on forms, sounds, harmonies, expressiveness of vocal gesture, and the deployment of large, unusual forces—without anxiety about the dramaturgical shape of the whole: that was taken care of by the clear-cut, conventional plot. It released him to *compose*. And he composed some of his most inspired music.

The structure of the "well-made" *Aida* is far tidier than that of *Don Carlos* (let alone that of *Forza*), and in some ways it resembles a *Don Carlos* made tidier and more compact. Both operas have an opening scene with a tenor romance placed

continued on p.53

VERDI NELLE IMMAGINI, 1941 COURTESY, LIM M LAI



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LEONTYNE PRICE

Internationally renowned American soprano **Leontyne Price** sings the title role of *Aida* in the house where she sang the part for the first time in her career in 1957, the year of her professional opera debut with San Francisco Opera as Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. The pre-eminent *Aida* of her generation, Miss Price has recorded the role twice and sung it with all of the world's major companies, returning to San Francisco Opera as *Aida* in 1959, '63 and '81, when she stepped in on one day's notice to sing the part for an ailing colleague. During the 17 seasons she has appeared here, the beloved soprano has essayed a number of roles for the first time with the company she considers her American home: the title role in the American premiere of Orff's *The Wise Maiden* (1958), Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (1959), Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1965), Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* (1971), the title roles of *Manon Lescaut* (1974) and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1977, her first Strauss role), and two parts that, along with *Aida*, have become Miss Price's signature roles: the Leonoras of *La Forza del Destino* (1963, '65 and '79) and *Il Trovatore* (1958, '71 and '81). Other assignments at San Francisco Opera include the title roles of *Madama Butterfly* (1960 and '61) and *Tosca* (1963), Liù in *Turandot* (1961), Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (1965) and Elvira in *Ernani* (1968 and '69). One of the most highly honored artists of our time, Miss Price was chosen to open the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center in the 1966 world premiere of Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Among her numerous honors are America's highest civilian award, the Medal of Freedom, the Kennedy Center Honors and 18 Grammy Awards. She is the only opera singer to have given a televised recital from the White House, for which she won an

Summer Season 1984



STEFKA EVSTATIEVA

Emmy Award, and in 1977 she received the San Francisco Opera Medal. Her long list of recordings (she is one of the five best-selling sopranos on record) includes two complete versions each of *Tosca*, *La Forza del Destino* and the Verdi Requiem, and an unprecedented three recordings of *Il Trovatore*. Renowned as a recitalist and concert artist, Miss Price made her recital debut at New York's Town Hall in 1954 singing the world premiere of Barber's *Hermit Songs* with the composer at the piano. In June 1982 the celebrated soprano gave a solo recital to a standing-room-only crowd at the War Memorial Opera House as part of the Summer Season. This year she was heard at the Met (including the national radio broadcast) in *La Forza del Destino*, and she returns there in 1985 as *Aida*. Miss Price, who just returned from a triumphant five-city recital tour of Japan, holds nine honorary doctorates from universities including Dartmouth, Columbia, Yale and Harvard.

Bulgarian soprano **Stefka Evstatieva** makes her San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Aida*, a part she is scheduled to sing in future performances in Montreal and Cologne. The acclaimed young lirico-spinto has won praise at many of the world's major houses in leading Verdi roles. She made her Paris Opera debut during the 1982-83 season as Desdemona in *Otello*, a role she has also sung at the Arena di Verona, the Berlin State Opera and at the Teatro Regio in Parma. It was as Desdemona that she made her triumphant debut during the 1981-82 season with the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, where she has since returned for performances of *Don Carlo* and *Don Giovanni*. During the 1982-83 season, she won enthusiastic critical acclaim for her debut at La Scala in the role of Maddalena



RUŽA BALDANI

in *Andrea Chénier* with José Carreras and Piero Cappuccilli. She also appeared as Maddalena at the Teatro Regio of Turin, and she bowed at the Vienna Staatsoper as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. Miss Evstatieva has also been applauded as Leonora at the Hamburg State Opera and at Barcelona's Teatro Liceo. During the 1983-84 season, she made her American debut as Lisa in *Pique Dame* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia in a production that was televised nationally last April over the PBS network. That same season saw her Metropolitan Opera debut as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*. Upcoming engagements include her Dallas Opera debut in *Il Trovatore*, *Andrea Chénier* both in Dallas and at La Scala in Milan and Leonora in *La Forza del Destino* in Pittsburgh, in addition to a variety of roles at the Vienna Staatsoper.

Returning to San Francisco Opera, Yugoslav mezzo-soprano **Ruža Baldani** sings Amneris in *Aida*, the role in which she made her 1972 Company debut and which she has performed under Karajan at the Salzburg Festival as well as at the Metropolitan Opera and the Verona Arena. San Francisco Opera audiences have also seen her as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* (1980) and Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1982). Before completing her studies at the Zagreb Academy of Music, she had already appeared at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the festivals of Dubrovnik, Holland and Edinburgh, and made impressive debuts at the Munich Staatsoper as Ulrica, and at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Marina in *Boris Godunov*. At the Met she has appeared as Maddalena in *Rigoletto* as well as Carmen, Orfeo, Ulrica, Erda in *Siegfried*, Fricka in *Die Walküre*, La Cieca in *La Gioconda* and Madelon in *Andrea Chénier*. During the 1982-83 season, this busy artist sang Fricka in *Die Walküre* in Munich;

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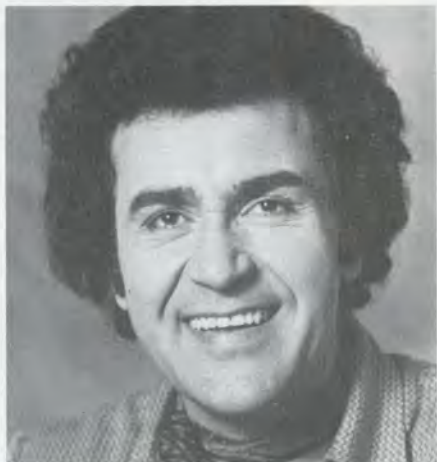
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DOLORA ZAJIC

recorded Verdi's *Oberto* under the baton of Lamberto Gardelli; participated in the New Year's Concert in Vienna; was featured as Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* in Zagreb, as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in Stuttgart, and as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* in Bonn; and, with tenor José Carreras, appeared in Madrid in a production of *Carmen* that was televised and recorded on disc. Her assignments this season have included Orfeo at the Kiev National Theatre, Ulrica in Geneva, Carmen at the Zagreb National Theater, and Spontini's *La Vestale* in Genoa under Bruno Bartoletti. Among her concert engagements are Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* in Rome, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Lorin Maazel in Rome, and Mozart's Requiem in Vienna.

Mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajic makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a Priestess in *Aida*. A native of Nevada, she received bachelor and master of music degrees at the University of Nevada in Reno, where she appeared in productions of *Mavra*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Suor Angelica*, *The Medium* and *Il Campanello* and sang the role of Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. With the Nevada Opera Association, her assignments included the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Siebel in *Faust*, the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Mrs. Ott in *Susannah* and Kate in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Other credits include the Principessa in *Suor Angelica* with the John Brownlee Opera Theater and Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the Regina Opera Company in New Jersey. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she participated in the 1983 Merola Opera Program and sang in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Sigmund Stern Grove. She also portrayed Suzuki at Villa Montalvo and sang the same role in Western Opera Theater's 1983 touring



FRANCO BONISOLLI



JUAN PONS



KEVIN LANGAN

production of *Madame Butterfly*. A regional finalist in the 1981 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she was winner of the Leona Gordon Lowin Memorial Award in the 1983 San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals. She scored a major triumph when she earned the bronze medal at the VII International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, making her the only non-Soviet winner and the first American to place in that event in 12 years.

Acclaimed for a repertoire that spans the history of opera from Monteverdi to Menotti, Italian tenor **Franco Bonisolli** sings Radames in *Aida*, a role he has recently sung in Paris. He made his Company debut on the opening night of the 1969 season as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, a role he portrayed on film opposite Anna Moffo, and returned most recently as Enzo in *La Gioconda* for the 1983 Fall Season. He was also seen here as Don José in *Carmen* opposite Teresa Berganza during the 1981 Fall Season. Other roles in his repertoire include Des Grieux in *Manon*, Arnold in *Guillaume Tell*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, and the title roles of *Faust*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Damnation de Faust* and *Werther*. He also sings such rarities as Rossini's *La Donna del Lago* and *L'Assedio di Corinto*, Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*, Giordano's *Fedora* and works by Scarlatti and Pergolesi. Bonisolli has appeared in all of the world's principal opera houses as well as the festivals of Bilbao, Verona, Salzburg and Munich. In recent years he has appeared in *Simon Boccanegra* at Covent Garden, *Il Trovatore* in Barcelona, *La Fanciulla del West* at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, *Don Pasquale* at the Vienna Staatsoper and *Turandot* in Hamburg. A frequent rec-

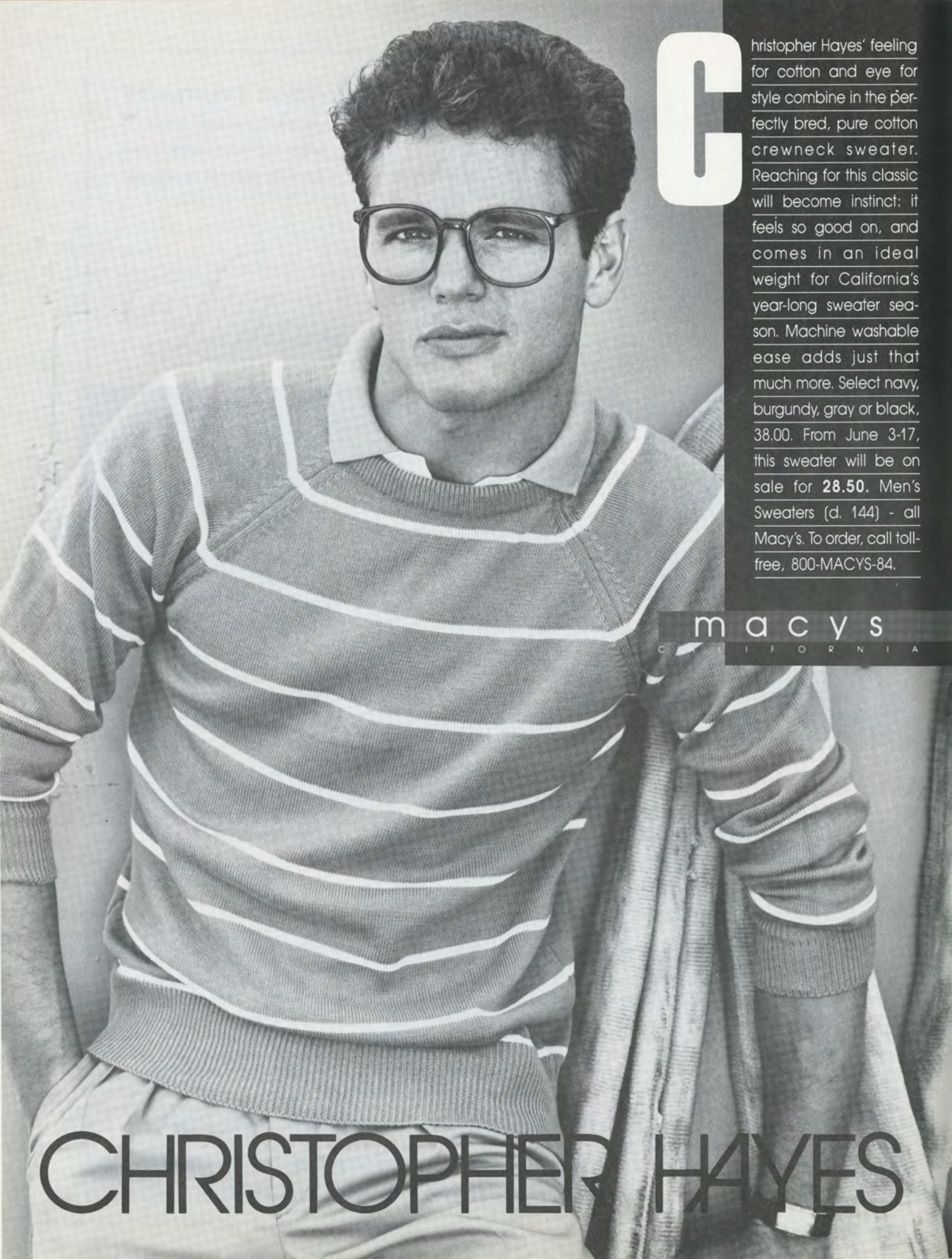
italist, Bonisolli has been applauded at the Barbican Centre in London, the Brucknerhaus in Linz, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, and in Monte Carlo. His 1984 credits include Calaf in *Turandot* in Hamburg, the Duke in *Rigoletto* at the Vienna Staatsoper, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in Capetown, South Africa. He has made numerous television and radio appearances, and his list of recordings includes the complete *Il Trovatore* and *Tosca*.

Spanish baritone **Juan Pons** returns to San Francisco Opera as Amonasro in *Aida*. He made his Company debut as Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux* in 1979, the year of his American debut in a concert performance of Verdi's *Aroldo* with the Opera Orchestra of New York in Carnegie Hall. He made his operatic debut in Barcelona's Gran Teatro del Liceo, and in 1978 he sang three Verdi roles in Mexico City: Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Don Carlo in *Ernani*. He made his La Scala debut in the title role of *Falstaff* during the 1981-82 season, and also bowed at Covent Garden and the Vienna State Opera in *Tosca*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Aida* and *Don Carlo*. He performed the title role of *Macbeth* with the Washington Opera and toured Japan with the La Scala company, appearing as Iago in *Otello*, opposite Placido Domingo and Mirella Freni. The 1982-83 season marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, including the national radio broadcast, and opened the Vienna State Opera season with performances of *Aida*, *Tosca* and *Don Carlo*. It was again as Falstaff that he made his Paris Opera debut, and he appeared in a new production of *La Traviata* in Bonn. Other engagements that season included appearances with the companies of Zurich, Hamburg, Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid,

Marseilles, Toulouse, Nancy and Naples. During the current season, he has returned to Hamburg for *Otello*, Barcelona for *Falstaff*, the Miami Opera for *Il Trovatore* and Vienna, where he appeared in a number of roles in his repertoire. In this country he has appeared in *Don Carlo* and *Il Trovatore* with San Diego Opera; and *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *L'Amore dei Tre Re* with Washington Opera. Career highlights include *I Pagliacci* and *Luisa Miller* with Placido Domingo in Madrid; *Andrea Chénier* with Montserrat Caballé and José Carreras in Barcelona, where he has also sung in *Aroldo*, *Aida*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata* and *Tosca*; and *Gemma di Vergy* in Paris.

Bass **Kevin Langan** returns to San Francisco Opera as Ramfis for the first three performances of *Aida*, and as Frank in *Die Fledermaus*. A favorite of San Francisco Opera audiences, he was a member of the 1980 Merola Opera Program, and since his Company debut that fall as the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila*, Langan has appeared in 21 different productions here. His most recent assignments were last fall season, when he again sang the Old Hebrew as well as Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Varlaam in *Boris Godunov* and the He-Ancient in the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. He made his recital debut in 1979 in London under the sponsorship of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and the late Walter Legge, and in 1980 he was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions winner. He has appeared with many North American companies, including those of Philadelphia, Toronto, St. Louis, Omaha, San Diego, Los Angeles, Palm Beach, San Jose, and New Jersey, singing a wide variety of

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Text by ANTONIO GHISLANZONI

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Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

(6/2, 6, 10, 15)

Jonathan Khuner

(6/20, 23, 27, 30)

Assistant Stage Director

Paula Williams

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera

Scenic Studios

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John Reid Costumes

First performance:

Cairo, December 24, 1871

First San Francisco Opera

performance:

October 3, 1925

SATURDAY, JUNE 2 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, JUNE 10 AT 2:00

FRIDAY, JUNE 15 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, JUNE 23 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, JUNE 30 AT 8:00

Supertitles on June 6, 20, 23, 27 and 30
by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello.

Supertitles are provided through the
generous support of the San Francisco Opera Guild.

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

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

Summer Season 1984

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Ramfis Kevin Langan
(June 2, 6, 10)
John Tomlinson
(June 15, 20, 23, 27, 30)

Radames Franco Bonisolli

Amneris Ruža Baldani

Aida Leontyne Price
(June 2, 6, 10, 15)
Stefka Evstatieva*
(June 20, 23, 27, 30)

King of Egypt James Patterson

A messenger Daniel Harper*

A priestess Dolora Zajic*

Amonasro Juan Pons

Solo dancers: Jamie Zimmerman*†
Antonio Lopez*†

*Priests, priestesses, soldiers,
ministers, officials, Ethiopian prisoners,
Egyptian populace*

Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut

†Courtesy of the San Francisco Ballet

TIME AND PLACE: Epoch of the Pharaohs;
Memphis and Thebes

ACT I Scene 1 The King's palace at Memphis

Scene 2 The temple of Fthà

Scene 3 Amneris's apartment in the
palace, Thebes

Scene 4 A public square in Thebes

INTERMISSION

Act II The banks of the Nile, outside
the temple of Isis

INTERMISSION

ACT III Scene 1 The judgment hall

Scene 2 A tomb below the temple

Auxiliary chorus in the Triumphal Scene
composed of members of
"Sacred & Profane," a chamber chorus.

The children appearing in *Aida*
are students of San Francisco Ballet School,
Richard L. Cammack, Director.

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

Aida/Synopsis

ACT I

SCENE 1—In the royal palace at Memphis, Radames, a young captain of the guard, learns from the high priest, Ramfis, that Ethiopia has again attacked and invaded Egypt's southern border and that a new army commander has been selected by the goddess, Isis. Alone, Radames hopes he is the chosen one, envisioning a glorious victory so he can free his beloved Aida, the Ethiopian slave of Amneris, the King's daughter. Amneris, who loves Radames herself, comes in and questions him shrewdly; her suspicion that he loves her slave increases when Aida enters. The King has urgently called his court together to hear a messenger report that the Ethiopian army, led by King Amonasro, is marching on Thebes. The Egyptian King announces Radames's appointment as Egyptian commander and leads the assemblage in a battle hymn. "Return victorious!" cries Amneris, echoed by the people, and alone Aida repeats the words, appalled that her beloved is going off to battle her father, her family and her people—for Aida is in fact the princess of Ethiopia. Torn by conflicting loyalties, she begs the gods for mercy.

SCENE 2—In the temple of Fthà, Radames is dressed in the sacred armor during a solemn ceremony of consecration to the service of his country. The fate of Egypt is in his hands.

SCENE 3—Radames has beaten the Ethiopians, and on the morning of his triumphal return Amneris is groomed by her ladies-in-waiting and distracted from her romantic daydreaming by a group of court musicians and dancers. At Aida's approach she dismisses her attendants, hoping to confirm her impression that Aida loves Radames. To test her, she claims Radames has died in battle, then says he lives. Certain from Aida's reactions that this mere slave is her rival for Radames's love, Amneris threatens her and leaves for the festivities as Aida follows in despair, reiterating her prayer.

SCENE 4—At the gate of Thebes, the people welcome the returning army bringing captured golden idols and treasures; triumphal dances are performed. Radames is borne in to be crowned with a wreath by Amneris. Ethiopian captives, too, are led in, among them Aida's father, King Amonasro, who remains unrecognized. In an aside he warns her not to betray his rank, then pleads for his fellow prisoners' lives. Ramfis and the priests urge death for the captives, but Radames intercedes,

supported by the pleas of the prisoners and the populace. Since the commander is the hero of the hour, the King releases all but Amonasro and Aida, then presents Radames with the hand of Amneris, dashing Aida's and Radames's dreams of happiness together.

ACT II

On a moonlit bank of the Nile, Ramfis leads Amneris into the temple of Isis for prenuptial prayers. Aida arrives for a secret meeting with Radames; overcome with nostalgia, she laments her conquered homeland. Startled out of her reverie by Amonasro, she learns that her father is plotting a new attack and proposes that Aida trick Radames into revealing the route of the Egyptian army. Horrified at the proposal, Aida nevertheless succumbs to her father's demands. Amonasro hides as Radames appears, ardent with promises to make Aida his bride after his coming victory in the renewed war. She suggests instead that they run off together, asking what route his army will take. No sooner has he answered than Amonasro steps out, triumphantly revealing his identity as King of Ethiopia. Amneris, leaving the temple, overhears the betrayal and denounces Radames. Amonasro lunges at her with a dagger, but Radames shields her and surrenders himself to Ramfis as the two Ethiopians escape.

ACT III

SCENE 1—In a temple of judgment Amneris determines to save Radames. When he is led in, she offers to spare his life if he will renounce Aida. This he says he will never do. Enraged, Amneris sends him on to his doom but immediately repents, listening in despair as the priests three times demand that he defend himself. Three times he is silent. They condemn him, and when they file past, Amneris pleads with them to let him live. When they refuse, she curses them.

SCENE 2—Radames, buried alive in a vault beneath the temple, turns his last thoughts to Aida, who, physically and emotionally spent by the ordeal of her escape and the capture and death of her father, now appears to him, having hidden in the crypt earlier that day to share his fate. Radames tries vainly to dislodge the stone that locks them in. Bidding farewell to earth, the lovers greet eternity while above them in the temple the repentant Amneris prays for Radames's soul.

Aida

Photos taken in rehearsal
by William Acheson

Leontyne Price





Kevin Langan

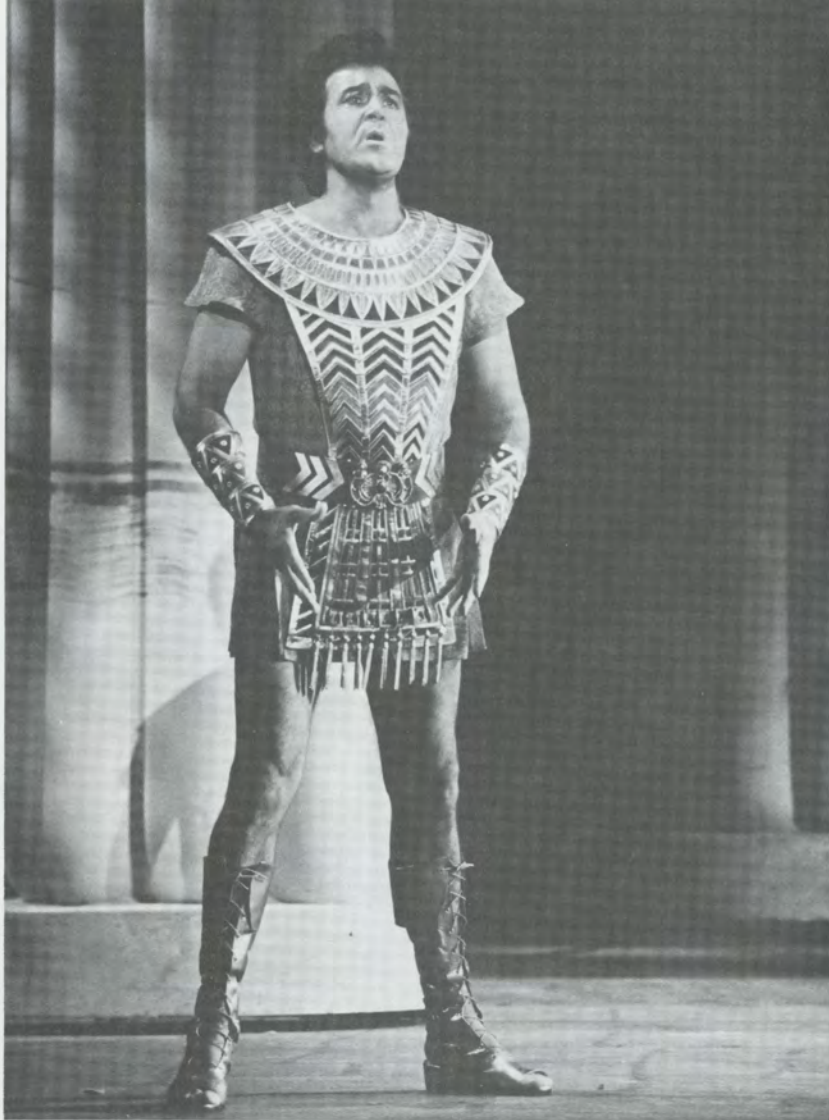


James Patterson



Daniel Harper

Jamie Zimmerman, Antonio Lopez



Franco Bonisoli





Leontyne Price



Ruža Baldani



Juan Pons, Leontyne Price





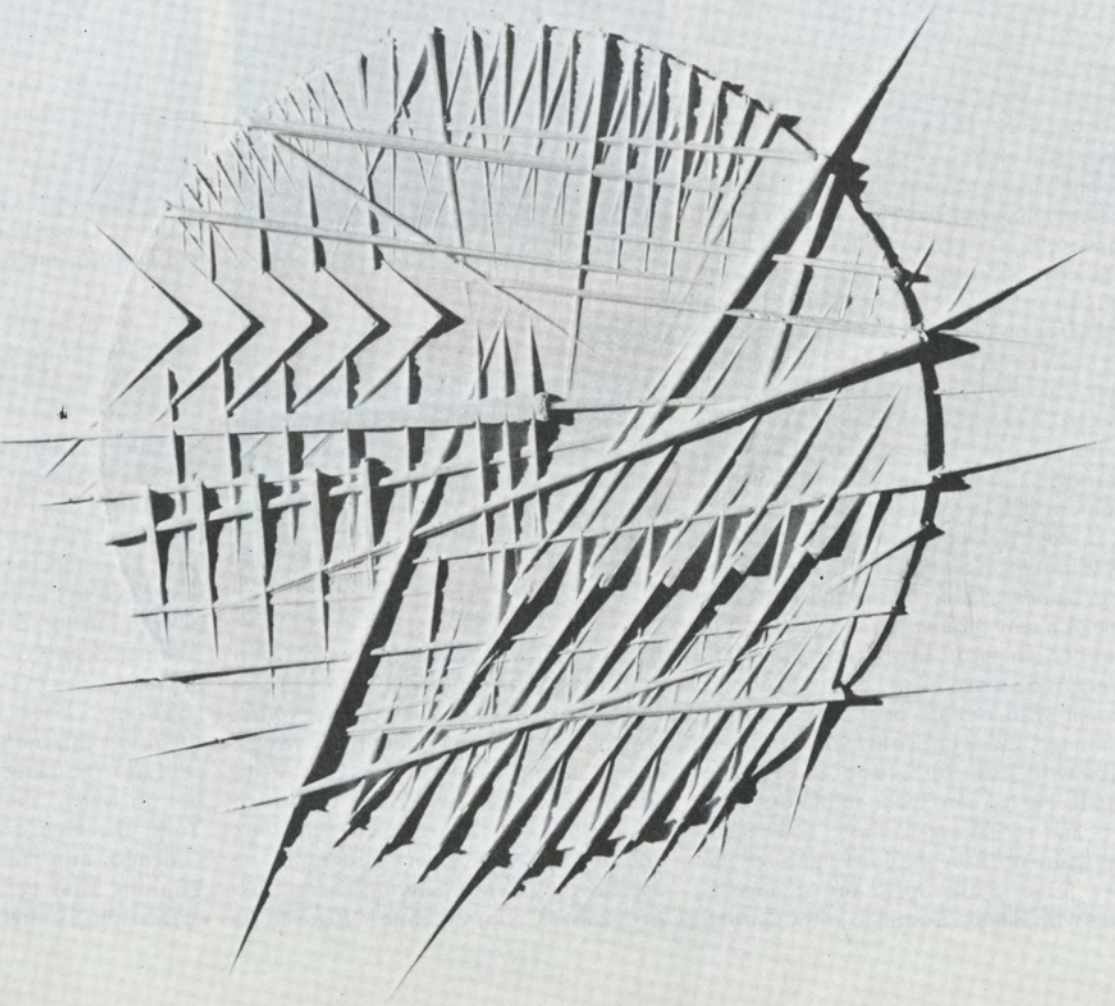
Leontyne Price, Juan Pons



Leontyne Price, Franco Bonisolli

OPERA PLAZA AND GHIRARDELLI SQUARE - SAN FRANCISCO

MODESTO LANZONE'S





JOHN TOMLINSON

continued from p.37

roles. He made his European operatic debut in 1982 as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Lyons, with additional performances of the role in Chambéry and Grenoble. This past year, his appearances included Oroveso in *Norma* in Edmonton and Vancouver, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Tulsa Opera, and in April he made a highly successful New York recital debut at the Carnegie Recital Hall. The 1983 recipient of the prestigious Richard Tucker Foundation Grant for advanced study in voice, Langan returns to San Francisco Opera this fall as Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* opposite Joan Sutherland. Other upcoming engagements include appearances with Santa Fe and New York City Opera, as well as Méphistophélès in *Faust* in Toronto and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* for Houston Grand Opera.

English bass **John Tomlinson** sings Ramfis in the last five performances of *Aida*, following his highly praised San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Pimen in *Boris Godunov*. Since his 1974 English National Opera debut he has been heard with that company in a wide variety of roles, including Ramfis, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the title role of *Boris Godunov* and Colline in *La Bohème*, as well as Hunding and Hagen in *The Ring of the Nibelung*. In 1978 he made his debut at Covent Garden, where in 1981 he sang Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Joan Sutherland. Other Covent Garden productions in which he has appeared include *Semele*, *The Rake's Progress*, *La Bohème*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and Peter Maxwell Davies's *Taverner*. He made his American opera debut last season as King Henry in *Lohengrin* in San Diego. His first assignment at the Aix-en-Provence Festival was



JAMES PATTERSON

the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, and he recently performed the role of Zaccaria in *Nabucco* for Vancouver Opera. This last May he sang the title role of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Avignon. Upcoming engagements include Banquo in *Macbeth* at the Paris Opera this fall and, next season, appearances as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Manoah in Handel's *Samson* at Covent Garden, and as King Mark in *Tristan and Isolde* with the English National Opera.

Bass **James Patterson** returns to San Francisco Opera for two roles during the 1984 Summer Season: Fafner in *Siegfried* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he made his San Francisco Opera debut as a Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season production of *La Bohème* and sang Fafner in the last performance of *Das Rheingold*. Last Fall Season he undertook five roles: The Lackey in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Dr. Grenvil in both casts of *La Traviata*, a Monk in *La Gioconda* and both a Border Guard and Cherniakovsky in *Boris Godunov*. As a participant in the 1982 Merola Opera Program he appeared in productions of *Rigoletto* and *The Magic Flute*, and went on to portray Sparafucile in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*. During the 1983 Showcase series he appeared as Ariadeno in *L'Ormino* and Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Most recently he was seen in the 1984 Showcase production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, in which he portrayed Osmin. During the summer of 1981 Patterson was an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera, where he appeared as Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*. His concert credits include Herod in Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the Marin Symphony and, during last year's Festival of Masses, the bass solos in the St.



DANIEL HARPER

Matthew Passion and the Verdi Requiem under Robert Shaw.

Tenor **Daniel Harper** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as a Messenger in *Aida*. As a member of the 1983 Merola Opera Program, he sang the title role of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Stern Grove and won the Gropper Memorial Award at the 1983 San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals. He appeared as Pinkerton in the 1983 Western Opera Theater touring production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, and is a 1984 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. A graduate of North Park College in Illinois, the young singer has won numerous awards, including the Opera Society of Chicago Young Artists Award, the Society of American Musicians Young Artists Award and third place in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Central Region Auditions. Harper has extensive concert credits in the Chicago area, including performances of *Elijah*, *Messiah*, the Mozart Requiem and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. He was recently heard in the Verdi Requiem with the San Francisco Bach Choir, and in April he participated in concert performances and a recording of Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti.

Jamie Zimmerman makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a solo dancer in *Aida*. A native of Portland, Oregon, she performed with the San Jose Dance Theatre before joining the San Francisco Ballet School in 1974. She became a member of the company in 1977, since which time she has appeared in the "Legs" movement of Lew Christensen's *Il Distratto*, the "Romanza" movement of Michael Smuin's *Stravinsky Piano Pieces*, the first movement



JAMIE ZIMMERMAN



ANTONIO LOPEZ



EDO DE WAART

of Smuin's *Bouquet*, and as Odette in Kent Stowell's *Swan Lake Act II*, the Amazon Captain in Christensen's *Con Amore* and the Sugar Plum Fairy in Christensen's *Nutcracker*. On the nationally telecast "Dance in America" series on PBS, Miss Zimmerman has been seen in Smuin's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest* and *A Song for Dead Warriors*, as well as the local KQED telecast of Robert Gladstein's *Symphony in Three Movements*.

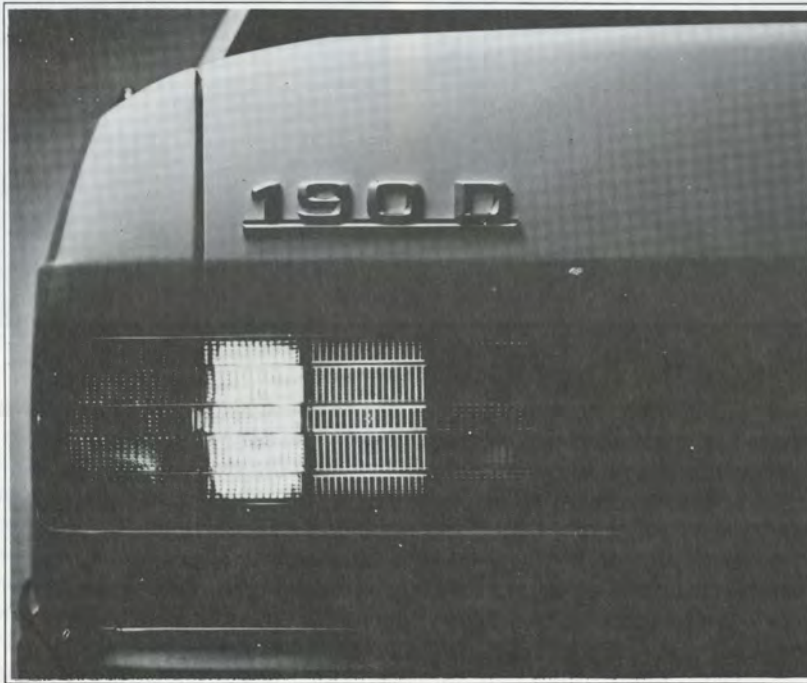
Marcos Antonio Lopez makes his San Francisco Opera debut as a solo dancer in *Aida*. Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he joined the San Francisco Ballet School in 1975, and was named a company apprentice in 1977. Since becoming a company member in 1979, he has performed such leading roles as the Cavalier in *Nutcracker*, the Beast/Prince in *Beauty and the Beast*, the Black Couple in *Forgotten Land*, Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, the pas de deux in *Stravinsky Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*, the Lover in *Shinju*, the third male soloist in *Symphony in Three Movements* and the principal male role in *Airs de Ballet*. He has created leading roles in *Chansons de Sheherazade*, the "Venus Flytrap" movement of *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, and in two works that were telecast nationally on PBS: *The Tempest* and *A Song for Dead Warriors*. His assignments during the 1984 repertory season include Adam in Arthur Mitchell's *Manifestations*, the Prince in *Cinderella*, and the Second Theme in *Four Temperaments*, as well as a role in Robert North's *Troy Game*.

San Francisco Symphony music director and conductor **Edo de Waart** returns to San Francisco Opera to lead performances of *Siegfried* and *Aida*. He made his Company debut last summer with the first two

installments of the *Ring*, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and will return next summer for the complete cycle, including *Götterdämmerung*. Music director of the San Francisco Symphony since 1977, he began his conducting career at the age of 23, when he became assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein. Returning to his native Netherlands, Maestro de Waart was appointed assistant conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Bernard Haitink. In 1967 he founded the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, and his celebrated recordings with that group quickly brought him international recognition. Appointed music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic in 1973, he led that orchestra to international renown during his six-year tenure. In 1974 he accepted the post of principal guest conductor for the San Francisco Symphony. Since becoming music director, he has established a practice of commissions and premieres each season, and three years ago he created the New and Unusual Music Series, which has become a model for the composer-in-residence programs now in operation with six American orchestras. Maestro de Waart is also responsible for the nation's first annual Beethoven Festival, the founding of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and the reconstructed Pops season. His operatic assignments have included *The Flying Dutchman* at Santa Fe in 1971; *Parsifal* (1981) and *Arabella* (1982) with the Netherlands Opera; and the opening of the 1979 Bayreuth Festival with *Lohengrin*. He has also led performances of *Parsifal* with the Bavarian State Opera and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Covent Garden. He has appeared as guest conductor of the world's greatest orchestras: the Berlin Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Dresden State Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus and

the Philadelphia Orchestra. Maestro de Waart's extensive list of recordings includes a complete *Der Rosenkavalier* on the Philips label, the company with which he established the San Francisco Symphony's first long-term recording contract. He also instituted a policy of annual touring and, under his direction, the Symphony has extended its activities year-round. He can be heard conducting the Symphony in weekly radio broadcasts over more than 200 stations nationwide. Maestro de Waart's guest-conducting engagements this summer include the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Hollywood Bowl, the Chicago Symphony at Ravinia, and the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood. On July 18 he opens the San Francisco Symphony Pops Series with an all-American program at the Civic Auditorium. In 1985, he assumes the position of music director and principal conductor of the Netherlands Opera.

Director **Bruce Donnell** makes his Company debut with *Aida*. A resident stage director at the Metropolitan Opera since 1975, he studied at Bayreuth before joining the staff of San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program in 1966. He served as assistant to Herbert Graf for productions at the Verona Arena and the festivals of Salzburg and Hellbrunn. Based in Geneva from 1972 to 1975, he also worked with Lotfi Mansouri during that period, working on productions that included *Faust* in Palermo and *Falstaff* in Tehran. He was an assistant director with our Company during the 1974 season, working with such directors as Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and August Everding, and the following year his projects included *The Daughter of the Regiment* at New York City Opera and *Rigoletto* for New Jersey State Opera. He joined the production staff at Santa Fe Opera in

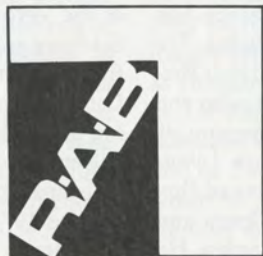


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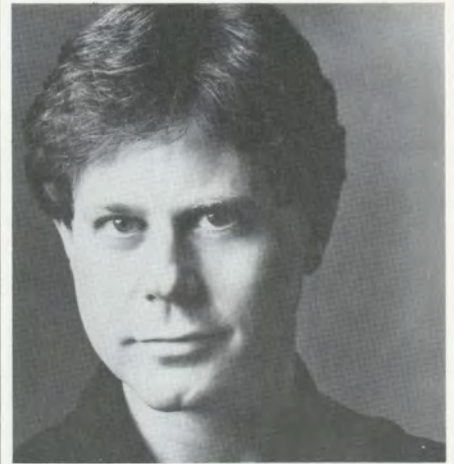
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BRUCE DONNELL

1977, and in 1978 he staged the John Dexter production of *La Forza del Destino* at the Paris Opera. His Metropolitan Opera assignments have included revivals of *Ara-bella*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He staged the Met production of *Der Rosenkavalier* that opened the 1983-84 season and was telecast nationally. Other television credits include Met productions of *Hansel and Gretel*, which won a 1982 Emmy Award for Best Daytime Classical Program, and the highly acclaimed 1982 production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Joan Sutherland and Alfredo Kraus that was telecast last year. He has also been responsible for the production of *La Gioconda* that has featured Eva Marton, Grace Bumbry, Renata Scotto, Carlo Bergonzi and Placido Domingo. Upcoming engagements this year include *I Vespri Siciliani* for Netherlands Opera and *Hansel and Gretel* for San Diego. Next year he directs *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* at the Met, and *Die Liebe der Danae* for Santa Fe.

Currently assistant director and ballet master of the San Francisco Ballet, **Robert Gladstein** returns to San Francisco Opera for *Aida* and *Die Fledermaus*. The California native made his Company debut during the 1983 Fall Season with *La Traviata* and *Samson et Dalila*. As a member of San Francisco Ballet from 1960 to 1967, Gladstein danced leading roles and choreographed his first ballet for the Ballet '62 Summer Choreographers' Series. From 1967 through 1969 he was a member of American Ballet Theatre, returning to San Francisco Ballet in 1970. Ballet master of the company since 1975, he became assistant director in 1981. In 1982 he was appointed consultant to the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Panel. He has created over 30 ballets, including



ROBERT GLADSTEIN

Gershwin (1977), *Stravinsky Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra* (1978), *Psalms* (1980), *Symphony in Three Movements* (1982, telecast on KQED-TV) and, most recently, *Signatures* for the 1984 repertory season. Gladstein's works are in the repertoires of American Ballet Theatre Players, Ballet West, Pacific Northwest Ballet and the Sacramento Ballet.



LAWRENCE CASEY

1969 until the company disbanded in 1973. He also designed sets for the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *The Threepenny Opera*; Andrei Serban's *Agamemnon*, which earned him a Joseph Maharam Distinguished Design Award in 1977; and the Chelsea Theater Company's production of *The Crazy Locomotive*, for which he won an Obie. On Broadway, Schmidt won Drama Desk Awards for his scenic contributions to the Andrews Sisters musical *Over Here* and Ira Levin's *Veronica's Room*. Other Broadway credits include scenic designs for Neil Simon's long-running musical *They're Playing Our Song* and Bernard Slade's *Romantic Comedy*. He also designed the original production of *Grease*, one of the longest-running musicals in Broadway history.

Lawrence Casey designed the costumes for San Francisco Opera's production of *Aida* first seen here as part of the 1981 Fall Season, during which he also designed Anja Silja's costumes for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. His association with San Francisco Opera goes back to 1973, when he assisted Jane Greenwood on the Company's first production of *La Favorita*. The following year he worked with Beni Montresor on the costumes for *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and in 1976 he won praise for the costume designs he created for the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. For 1981 Spring Opera Theater he received acclaim for costume designs of John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytaemnestra* and Monteverdi's *Il Ballo delle Ingrate*. He has designed for numerous regional theaters, including the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, and the McCarter Theatre in Princeton. His designs for the dance group Crowsnest have been seen on PBS as well as at New York's Public Theater. In 1982 he designed



THOMAS J. MUNN

the costumes and sets for an Obie-winning Off-Broadway adaptation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* starring Linda Hunt (for whom Casey designed the gown she wore when she accepted her Oscar on this year's Academy Awards show), and last year he provided the costume designs for the Obie-winning production of Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*. Recently his costumes were seen in the Guthrie Theatre production of *Heartbreak House* in Minnesota.

In his ninth year with San Francisco Opera, **Thomas J. Munn** is responsible for lighting all of the 1984 Summer Season productions. Since 1976, he has designed the lighting and special effects for over 70 San Francisco Opera productions. His assignments last year included new lighting designs for *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the American premiere of *The Midsummer Marriage*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and *Boris Godunov*. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979 and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed for Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater companies throughout the United States and Europe. His most recent projects have been for the Hartford Ballet, the Washington Opera, Houston Grand Opera and the Netherlands Opera. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981 and the Pavarotti Concert in 1983. He is currently a consultant on new theater projects for the Netherlands Opera and Lake George Opera Festival.



DOUGLAS SCHMIDT

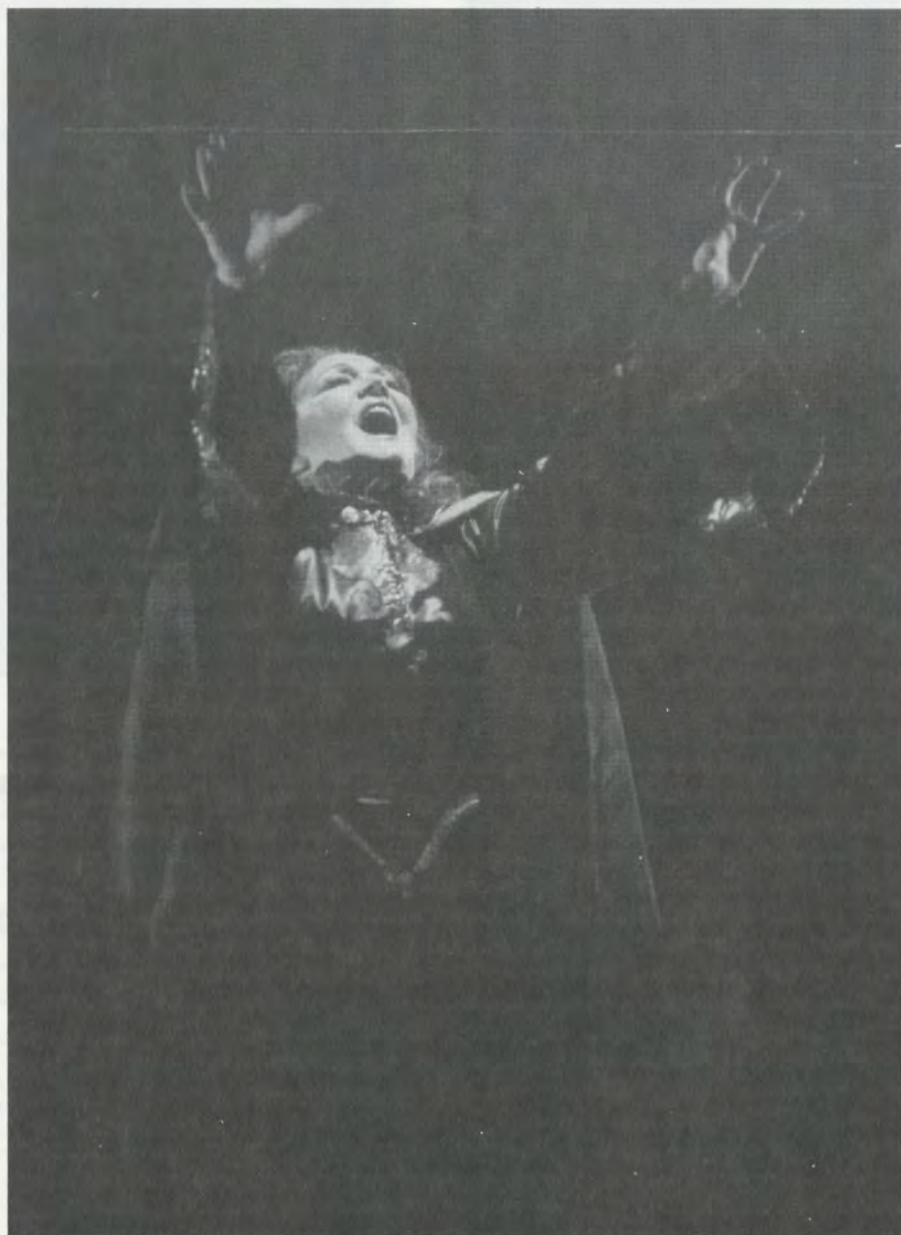
Douglas Schmidt has designed the sets of *Aida*, first seen here in 1981. Spring Opera audiences will remember his sets for Hans Werner Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* in 1978, and his designs for the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* in 1976 and *Samson et Dalila* in 1980 (and again in 1983) were greeted with high critical acclaim. In New York, Schmidt has long been associated with the New York City Opera, the New York Shakespeare Festival and television station WNET. His work for the theater includes award-winning designs for Gorky's *Enemies* for the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, where he was resident designer from

Rysanek Returns

San Francisco Opera patrons will have the opportunity to experience a truly special event during the 1984 Summer Season when one of the opera world's most beloved artists makes a rare concert appearance on June 29 in the War Memorial Opera House. A favorite of local audiences since her eagerly anticipated American debut here in 1956, she is immediately recognizable to knowledgeable opera-goers merely by mentioning a few of the many roles for which she has become famous: Senta, Sieglinde, Lady Macbeth, the Empress—it could only be Leonie Rysanek, one of those rare singers who can elicit superlatives from the critics as readily as she evokes thunderous ovations. "Who else," asks Peter G. Davis in *New York* magazine, "generates so much theatrical intensity, gives of herself so generously, takes such dangerous risks, and still makes such a glorious sound with so exciting a voice?"

For nearly 28 years, San Franciscans have known the answer. Since bowing at the War Memorial Opera House as Senta in 1956, Miss Rysanek has shared with us her wealth of musical and dramatic insight into 15 different roles, including those with which she has become most closely identified: Lady Macbeth (1957), Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* (1958 and '73), Tosca (1976), Chrysothemis in *Elektra* (1973 and '79) and what are perhaps the brightest jewels in her operatic crown, Sieglinde (1956, '76, '81 and '83) and the Empress from *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1960, '76 and '80). In 1982, Miss Rysanek selected San Francisco Opera as the site of the first Ortrud of her distinguished career.

San Franciscans, of course, are not the only ones to appreciate this magnificent artist, and the accolades that have been bestowed upon her indicate the unique position she holds in the hearts of opera-lovers all over the world. Holder of the



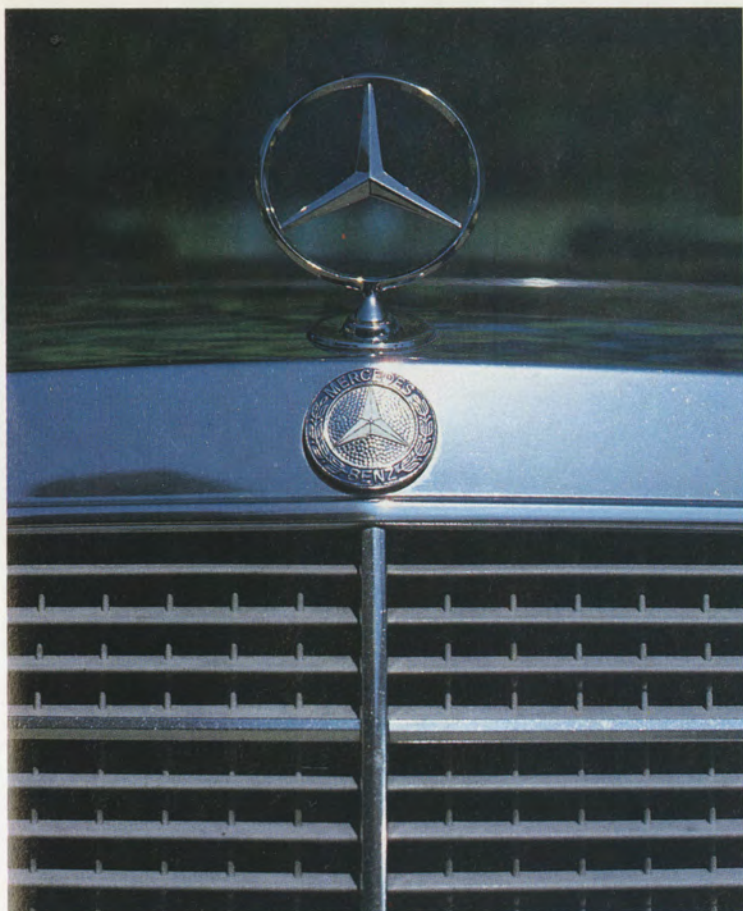
Leonie Rysanek as Ortrud in her first assayal of the role at the San Francisco Opera in 1982.

prestigious title of Kammersängerin with both the Vienna Staatsoper and Munich Opera, she also received the unique Lotte Lehmann ring from the members of the Vienna Staatsoper, and the San Francisco Opera Medal was awarded to her in 1976. Most recently, New York journalists nearly ran out of adjectives when they described the incredible ovation she received last February after the celebration of her 25th anniversary at the Met. Where Leonie Rysanek goes, excitement and love follow.

Miss Rysanek's concert of June 29 will be

given at 8 p.m. in the War Memorial Opera House, accompanied by the San Francisco Opera Orchestra under the baton of Edo de Waart. The soprano is expected to sing arias and scenes from her German and Italian repertoire.

Tickets for this memorable occasion are available at the Opera House Box Office or can be charged by phone at (415) 864-3330. Ticket prices are: Rear Balcony, \$8; Front Balcony, \$12; Balcony Circle, \$15; Dress Circle, \$18.50; Grand Tier and Orchestra, \$25; Single Box Seat, \$35.



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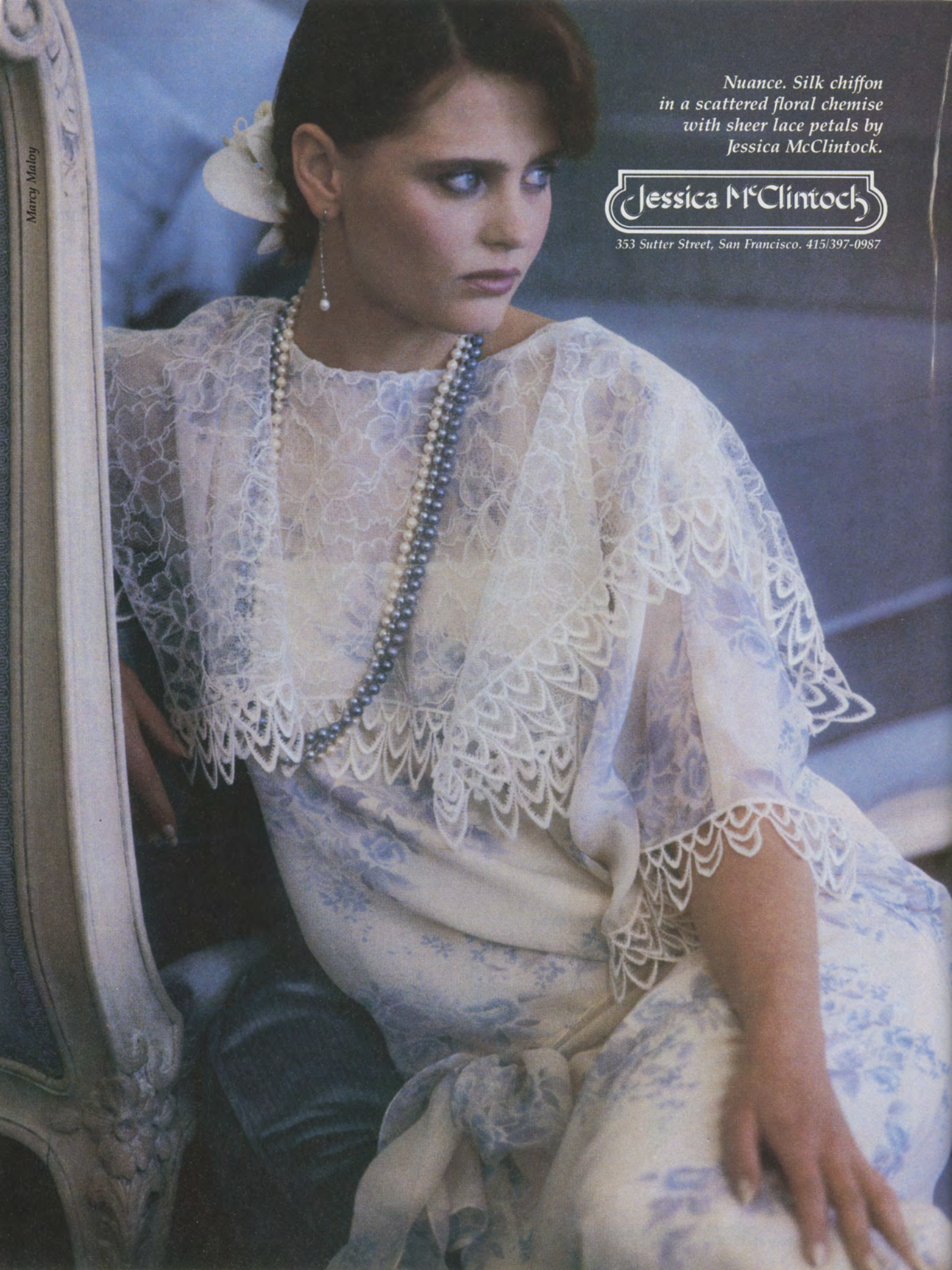
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"least bad operas . . ." continued from p.32

early, followed by an assembly and a choral close. In both operas, Scene 2 is set in a temple with solemn chanting, and Scene 3 opens with the traditional women's chorus, with an inset solo for the mezzo. At the heart of both there is a massive spectacle with stage band, multiple choruses, and the principals' experiencing in public a crisis in their private affairs; the *largo concertato* is in each case a general plea for clemency implacably opposed by the priesthood. The public scene is then followed by a series of private scenes, mainly monologues and duets, choral only when priests thunder their doom on the hero. (The original *Don Carlos* contains a chorus of Inquisitors in the last act.) In the last of the duets, hero and heroine bid farewell to one another in this life and look forward to joyful reunion in another, brighter world. The parallels should not be pressed too far, but, once observed, they throw into relief the greater flexibility and compactness of *Aida*—flexible in such things as the placing of the heroine's first aria, "Ritorna vincitor!", and compact in that only three characters, not five, are tangled in an emotional web and rent by divided feelings. The elaborate "diagram of passions" for *Don Carlos* involves three triangles with Carlos as a common point. *Aida* is built on a simple traditional triangle.

Verdi did not simply accept Mariette's synopsis as it stood. The division of Act II into two scenes was his (In Mariette, Amneris forces Aida's secret from her in the setting of the Triumphal Scene.) He himself devised the divided setting of the last scene, placing the brilliantly lit Temple of Fthà (Vulcan) above Mariette's dim dungeon. When it came to shaping the actual words of the libretto, his determinant hand can be traced in as many lines as not. The correspondence with Ghislanzoni is famous—one of the prime documents of composer-librettist collaboration. Verdi's letters were published by Alessandro Luzio (not quite in the right order) in the *Copialettere*; they appear in English (together with some of Ghislanzoni's replies)

in Hans Busch's *Verdi's Aida: The History of an Opera in Letters and Documents*; the latest and most penetrating commentary on them appears in Volume 3 of Budden's *The Operas of Verdi*. Most of the originals are now in the Morgan Library in New York. Verdi's concerns are for a combination of dramatic effect, theatrical immediacy, emotional tone, the *parola scenica* (the word that seems to sum up a situation in a single stroke), pace, contrast, and—this is brought out most fully by Budden—apt and musically inspiring poetic meters.

Without extended musical examples, one cannot begin to demonstrate the

and for three trombones). Verdi sought to inform himself about the rituals of Ancient Egypt and the part music played in them. Mariette let him know that sacred dances were danced "in long robes and to a slow, solemn beat. The accompanying music was probably a kind of plainchant in the bass, with a very high chant above, sung by young sopranos (boys). The instruments accompanying these dances were 24-string harps, double flutes, trumpets, deep drums or side-drums, enormous clappers, and cymbals." A learned friend of Ricordi supplied the same account of Egyptian initiation rites that



A scene from *Aida* at the Paris Opera in 1880.

harmonic subtleties of *Aida*; the new delicacies of counterpoint (which, as Budden puts it, are not "learned gesture à la Meyerbeer designed to impress a snobbish public, but rather the unobtrusive polyphony of a Mozart or Schubert quartet"); the motivic networks not only of melodies associated with characters but also, more intricately, of related themes expressing related ideas; the exotic "Egyptian" scale with its flattened supertonic, which Verdi seems to have invented; the exotic colors in the orchestration (much use of harps; long, winding woodwind melodies; block writing for three flutes

Mozart and Schikaneder had used for *The Magic Flute*. The composer—who once declared that while copying reality was good, inventing a reality was better still—found useful hints for possible procedures but then invented his own "Egyptian sound".

Neither words nor brief music examples give much idea of it. One can verbalize what happens at, say, the start of Act III, the Nile Scene, that magical moonlit sound-picture. First violins, muted, touch staccato Gs across four octaves. Second violins, muted, add a tremolo on G and D, while muted violas pluck Gs across three

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octaves, more slowly, and divided cellos sound a soft, shining, high octave G on harmonics. A flute steals in with a melody oscillating on Gs around a long D, breaks into trills and flutters around the Gs, and is then indecisive between G major and G minor. The high pedal G persists through the priestly chanting and then lingers on, glinting from two solo violins, as Aida enters. But what matters is to hear the passage.

The Cairo performance was given on the 24th of December, 1871. The Scala performance followed seven weeks later, on February 8, 1872. In laconic phrases in a letter to his friend Arrivabene the composer expressed his satisfaction: "The public received it well. I don't want to affect modesty with you, and certainly this is one of my least bad operas. Time will give it the place it deserves. In a word, it seems to me a success that will fill the theater." Verdi himself supervised the next production, given in Parma in April. Franco Faccio, the Scala conductor, conducted it in Padua in June. In March 1873, Verdi supervised its production in Naples. In all these productions, Aida and Amneris were sung by the Scala interpreters, Teresa Stolz and Maria Waldmann, and Radames was Giuseppe Capponi, who had rehearsed for the Scala premiere but became ill and had to be replaced. The Scala Amonasro, Francesco Pandolfini, sang in Padua and Naples. Stolz, Waldmann, Capponi, and Adriano Pantaleoni (the Parma Amonasro) sang *Aida* in Ancona in May. Verdi was unwilling at first to allow performances at any house that did not have the approved cast and the orchestral, choral and scenic resources for it—and also, he insisted, the artistic seriousness required for a "modern opera," as opposed to old-style operas made up of "one number after another." In several letters he now formulated his belief that in *Forza*, *Don Carlos*, and now *Aida* he had composed operas of a new kind, works whose presentation should be supervised by a single directing intelligence responsible for every detail, musical and scenic—operas where every little thing was important and part of a greater

whole.

But later in 1873 he authorized a "general release," and *Aida* then began its triumphal progress throughout the world. An official production book was published, with stage plans, positions, and instructions for every move and gesture, down to the placing of the choral subconductors, and with practical tips such as to extinguish any gas jets that might set fire to Amneris when she entered, in the last scene, in her long mourning veil. No departure of any kind from this official staging or from the approved costume designs, it declared, should be countenanced. *Aida* reached Buenos Aires in October 1873 (with the Cairo *Aida*, Antonietta Anastasi-Pozzoni), and New York in November (conducted by Muzio). The New York company then took it to Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Boston. In April 1874 it was heard in Vienna (with Amalie Materna, soon to be Bayreuth's first Brünnhilde and then Kundry, as *Aida*) and in Berlin (with Mathilde Mallinger, who had been Wagner's first Eva, as *Aida*, and Marianne Brandt, his alternate Bayreuth Kundry, as Amneris). Verdi conducted it in Vienna in 1875, with Stolz and Waldmann, and the next year in Paris, at the Théâtre-Italien, with Stolz, Waldmann, and Pandolfini. The London premiere was also in 1876, at Covent Garden, with Adelina Patti as its heroine. It reached San Francisco on October 17, 1877 at the Baldwin Theater; the Metro-

VERDI NELLE IMMAGINI, 1941
COURTESY, LIM M. LAI



Francesco Tamagno, one of the most prominent interpreters of the role of Radames in *Aida* in the late 1800s.

politan Opera staged it in 1886.

The annals need not be prolonged. The important production to note here is the Paris Opéra premiere, in March 1880—about the 150th production the opera had received. Verdi came to Paris to supervise and conduct it. For half a century he had hoped to win a decisive, unqualified Paris

Opéra triumph. Now, at long last, he had it. After the premiere, he wrote to the Countess Maffei, "I think that twelve or fourteen years ago I wrote that *Don Carlos* was not a success. Now with the same frankness, and little modesty, I tell you that *Aida* is a success." So it was, and so it has been ever since. Verdi was not a composer like Wagner, prepared to go his own way whatever the public thought of his works. In *Don Carlos*, he had taken Meyerbeerian grand opera to heights where a century had to pass before the public could follow him with enthusiasm, and in making the ascent he had stumbled: more than once he revised the opera, without ever achieving a single "definitive" version. In *Aida*, he aimed less high insofar as the operatic matter was concerned. He chose a subject well within his grasp but one that would allow his new musico-dramatic powers to flower more richly than ever before; and he composed a masterpiece. Perhaps one should call it—if the term be allowed—a limited masterpiece: *Otello* and *Falstaff* were still in the future (although the seed for *Otello* had been planted in 1879, and was beginning to grow). Meanwhile, the Paris production of *Aida* in 1880 crowned his career. Most of what he had striven for was now securely achieved. □

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Aida at the Verona Arena in 1982.

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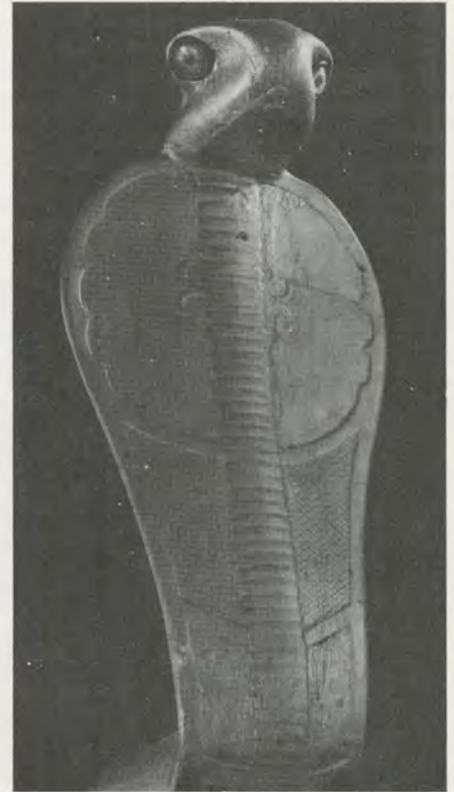
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Gods and Symbols *continued from p.24*

dynastic period, being portrayed as a male human figure wrapped in a mummy-like shroud with only his head and hands exposed. His head is covered by a smooth skullcap, and his hands grasp a triple scepter.

The image of Ptah runs contrary to the expectations of many people, who think of Egyptian gods as being animal-headed. Many gods and goddesses are portrayed as human figures with animal heads, but we would be doing the sophisticated people of that glorious civilization a disservice to assume that they actually believed the gods looked like that. More likely the artistic expression represented an aspect of the god's power or nature. Animals were frequently associated with particular gods. Since Ptah was closely involved in the creation of the world, as the priesthood at Memphis taught it, he was associated for obvious reasons with the worship of the Apis Bull, which dates back to predynastic times. Eventually the Apis Bull became so venerated—there was only one at a time, and it had to have the requisite markings—that it was embalmed after its death. Rameses II had constructed a large underground gallery where these sacred relics were stored, around which an entire complex sprang up, known as the Serapeum, in the necropolis at Memphis. (You will see a bull carried in during the Triumphal Scene. Other animal-god figures you may notice include the dog- or jackal-headed god Anubis, god of the dead and embalming who weighed the heart of a deceased person in the underworld to test his worthiness; the scales themselves are depicted upon one standard. Additional figures apparent in the Triumphal Scene will be dealt with below.)

Ptah played a crucial role in the "Memphite Cosmogony" (the theory of creation as espoused in Memphis), which was only one of several such theories. Each cosmogony, of course, provided divine evidence of the pre-eminence of the area in which the belief was accepted, another example of the intertwining of religious and political sides of Egyptian life. Accord-



One of the more intimidating figures in Egyptian art, this cobra from the tomb of Tutankhamen, called simply "living god," is actually a beneficent being who was expected to help the pharaoh in his travels through the underworld after his death.

ing to the priests of Memphis, Ptah created the world and everything—including the gods—through the agency of his heart (the seat of intelligence to the Egyptians) and tongue (the creative principle). Thus Ptah created the universe by his very utterance, a concept encountered in other faiths: "In the beginning," the Christian New Testament tells us, "was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

The very act of speaking had special significance to the Egyptians, and an important part of the ceremonies over the dead was the "Opening of the Mouth"; no fewer than three chapters or spells from the so-called Book of the Dead are for the purpose of giving the deceased the use of his mouth in the hereafter. "My mouth has been opened by Ptah," says the deceased in one version, "the bonds that gag



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my mouth have been loosed by the god of my city."

Names in particular seem to have had great importance to the Egyptians. Numerous spells from the Book of the Dead (more accurately called the Book of Going Forth by Day) are cast in the form of the dead one naming various deities and objects, since to know a being's name gives one power over that being in many mystical systems, from ancient Egypt through the black-magic grimoires of the middle ages and beyond. "To speak the name of the dead," declared the Egyptians, "is to make him live again," and a vestige of this sort of name-fetish is found in our own fairytales such as Rumpelstiltskin.

Because of his creative aspect, Ptah was the god of artists and craftsmen, and was accordingly identified by the Greeks with Hephaestus, or Vulcan; it is for this reason that some *Aida* libretti describe the setting as "the Temple of Vulcan." Ptah had early associations with the sun—as did many important gods in Egypt; we cannot overestimate the importance of the sun to people in that climate—and later became associated with a sun deity named Seker. Gods often had more than one name, and the sun had various names depending on whether it was rising, at its zenith, setting or, in the case of Seker, under the earth in the realm of the dead at night.

In an earlier version of the creation story, supported by the priests of Heliopolis (the biblical city of On), it was Khepera, or the sun in its rising aspect, that first emerged from Nun, the primordial ocean. In sharp distinction to the more abstract concept of the primary logos, or first utterance, Khepera created the next two gods, Shu and his sister Tefnut, through an auto-erotic act. (This particularly shocked the great Victorian Egyptologist E.A. Wallis Budge, who carried on at great length in his writings about the gross primitivism of something that apparently did not disturb the Egyptians at all.) Shu and Tefnut, in turn, correspond to the power symbolized at Memphis by Ptah's heart and tongue, the forces through which everything was created.

Khepera was associated by the Egyptians with the scarab beetle, which they

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The resurrected god Osiris, usually depicted as mummified, is shown in the "Book of the Dead" presiding over the hereafter with his wife, the protective goddess Isis, behind him. The name of Isis is frequently invoked in *Aida*.

observed rolling large balls of dung in which the beetle laid its eggs and from which new life was thus seen emerging. The sun, as the source of all life, was therefore envisioned as a great ball being rolled by the god Khepera in the form of a scarab beetle, and a spectacular representation of that image dominates the stage in the first act of *Aida* when the Pharaoh

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appoints Radames head of the campaign to Ethiopia. Many smaller images of Khepera adorn the Triumphal Scene as well.

Act II in San Francisco Opera's production of *Aida* takes place, as the libretto specifies, on "the banks of the Nile, outside the temple of Isis." Aside from the fact that the regular annual flooding of the Nile would seem to preclude a temple being too close to the river itself, the libretto does not specify which temple of Isis is meant, and her cult was one of the most pervasive in Egypt. Isis herself was considered the wife of Osiris, the god of the dead, and as the Osirian cult grew in later dynastic time, so did Isis's own importance, although her own personification as loving and protective mother certainly enhanced her appeal as well. There were temples built to her in Rome and Pompeii; Augustus Caesar had the temple commemorating her birth (at what is now called Dendara) decorated; and she was worshipped on the island of Philae until the Emperor Justinian had her temple closed and turned into a Christian church in the middle of the sixth century A.D.

(Isis and Osiris are mentioned in another opera with an Egyptian setting, Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Mozart was influenced by Masonic teachings, which in turn drew heavily upon the imagery of ancient Egypt. At that time, however, no one had cracked the code of hieroglyphics, and their interpretation of the old symbols was somewhat arbitrary. Other operas with Egyptian settings range from Handel's *Tolomeo* and *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* to Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*, Massenet's *Thaïs*, Henry Hadley's *Cleopatra's Night*, Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* and, most recently, *Akhnaten* by Philip Glass.)

We have more anecdotal information on Isis than most Egyptian deities, since Plutarch left us a detailed account of the principal events in her life. The countless references to Isis and Osiris on monuments and in ancient literature seem to confirm the accuracy of his account.

Osiris was most likely a later version of a predynastic god of vegetation who civilized human beings, teaching them



Isis was to become one of the most popular of all Egyptian deities. In this bas-relief she is shown holding a stalk of papyrus as a staff, a symbol common to most goddesses.

many things and ruling during a distant Golden Age. But Osiris had a jealous brother, Set, who devised a stratagem to kill Osiris. Grief-stricken, Isis searched for the body of her dead husband, and, with the aid of Thoth, the ibis-headed god of writing, learning, magic and the moon,

animated Osiris's body so that she was able to conceive a son by him. Osiris's body was then embalmed—the first in history—and hidden in the papyrus swamps, but Set came upon it by chance and tore it into 14 pieces, scattering them throughout a number of distant locales. Isis then roamed the earth in search of the various pieces and, at each place she found one, buried it, which accounted for the numerous sites throughout Egypt that claimed to contain the body of Osiris. Isis's son, Horus, eventually revenged his father, who ruled the land of the dead just as his son now ruled the land of the living. The Osiris legend is thus one of the earliest to tell of a god who was killed and later resurrected to judge all souls and reign in the hereafter.

Horus, like many sun-associated gods, was depicted as hawk-headed—the Triumphal Scene is replete with hawk symbolism—and it is Horus with whom the pharaohs of Egypt identified themselves. The King of Egypt in *Aida* is thus himself a religious figure, and the pharaoh was the anointed intermediary between the gods and human beings. Indeed, through much of Egypt's history, the pharaoh was the only human being that artistic convention allowed to be portrayed in the presence of the gods. The King of Egypt in our production of *Aida* is arrayed in an elaborate headdress in which costume designer Lawrence Casey has combined a number of distinct elements. At the top is a white crown within a red one, the traditional double crown of Egypt symbolizing the union of the two lands. Around this is a wreath of uraeus serpents, which historically are often found on the foreheads of kings singly alongside the head of a vulture. These two animals (both the vulture and serpent are prominent in the Triumphal Scene) were representations of the goddesses Uatchet and Hekhebet, who respectively presided over Lower and Upper Egypt and again symbolize dominion over the two lands. All of this Casey has mounted upon a *nemes* headdress, a style famous to many from the gold funerary mask of King Tut.

The pharaoh in essence was the ultimate high priest of Egypt, and all other



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The monotheistic Pharaoh Akhenaten is seen here worshipping the sun-disc Aten. Descending from above are the rays of the sun, terminating in human hands, an image seen in Act I of the San Francisco Opera production of *Aida*.

priests were in effect his deputies. But the priests of the more popular gods began to acquire greater wealth and to wield more and more power. Priesthood became a hereditary occupation, and the priests of the biggest cult centers—such as those for Ptah in Memphis or for Amen the sun-god in Thebes—acquired great influence. The robes designed for San Francisco

Opera's priests by Casey incorporate the design of a leopard skin that was worn by priests over their bare upper torso. Real skins were sometimes employed, while at other times artificial skins were crafted with tapestry-woven markings in the shape of five-pointed stars. A "skin" of this type was found, along with a real one, in the tomb of King Tut.

The immense power of the priests is illustrated by the effective opposition they gave when Amenophis IV attempted his famous conversion of Egypt to monotheism. Amenophis IV (sometimes spelled Amenhotep) came to the throne around 1353 B.C., when the power of the priests of Amen was formidable. But early in life he became obsessed with one aspect of Amen, namely his manifestation as the disc (or "Aten") of the sun, and he began to devote himself solely to this one aspect, even changing his own name from Amenophis ("Amen is satisfied") to Akhenaten



The sacred Apis bull of Memphis, sometimes considered a reincarnation of the god Ptah, was pampered in life and embalmed after death.

("The glory of Aten") and moving the capital from Thebes to a new city he had erected to the glory of his god, Akhenaten (near modern Armana). He forbade worship of any god other than Aten, and his fanatical religious beliefs rent the very fabric of Egyptian life, bringing to the brink of ruin the empire that his own great-great-grandfather, Thutmose III, had brought to its zenith.

Despite strenuous efforts to stamp out the old venerated cults of the land, Akhenaten's religion died shortly after he did, and his own successor, Tutankhaten ("The living image of Aten"), restored the old order and changed his name to Tutankhamen ("The living image of Amen").

The brief period during which the Aten religion flourished, however, brought with it a new style of art, in which a commonly recurring image is the disc of the sun with numerous rays extending from it, each ray ending in an outstretched hand. This image is beautifully reproduced on the golden doors of the first scene of Act I of this production of *Aida*.

The art of the Aten cult was the first that freely portrayed common people, and the religion of Aten was remarkably democratic in its outreach to all stations of life. But outside of that brief period, extant religious evidence is related almost exclusively with large-scale ceremonies or the cult of the dead—coming chiefly from public monuments and private tombs—so that we have only the foggiest notion as to what religion meant to the common people and what role it played in their daily life. Like *Aida*, Egyptian religion was mostly concerned with royalty.

If we can gather anything about personal attitudes in ancient Egypt toward their gods, it would be that people were more creative in applying active imagination in their worship. The spells of the Book of the Dead, for instance, contain many typical hymns of praise to various deities, extolling their deeds and virtues. But the Egyptian was just as apt to assign speeches to the gods in which the virtues of the worshipper were enumerated and praised, or even to assume the identity of the god or goddess himself, and thereby exalt his own spirit with the strength and power of the divine ones. We can only imagine the combined serenity and exhilaration experienced by the Egyptian when, in the 42nd spell of the Book of the Dead, he identifies each part of his body with a specific deity and concludes, "There is no part of me that is without a god, and Thoth is a protection to my flesh. Not men nor gods, nor the glorified ones nor the damned; not generations past, present or future shall inflict any injury upon me. I am he who cometh forth and proceedeth, and whose name is unknown to men. I am Yesterday. 'Witness of Eternity' is my name: the persistent traveler upon the heavenly highways I survey. I am the Everlasting One." □

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How To Do Well While Doing Good

By ROBERT L. HOBSON

Make more money by giving something away? "Preposterous," you say—but it is very true. People who are charitably minded are making more money for themselves every day by doing some rather simple tax- and estate-planning.

We all know that Uncle Sam has encouraged private philanthropy for years by providing special deductions and other tax advantages for charitable contributions. With just a little planning you can put these benefits to work for you and actually increase your income for the rest of your life.

This is accomplished by what is called deferred charitable giving, and here is how it works.

We are all familiar with ordinary charitable giving, which usually involves a cash gift of \$5, \$100, or even \$1,000 or more. This direct giving is generally from income received from one source or another (wages, salary, dividends, interest, etc.), and reduces disposable income when made. This common form of charitable giving is called OUTRIGHT giving.

The more sophisticated donor will make a charitable gift of *assets* rather than dollars. For example, Mr. Jones may make a gift of \$1,000 worth of *stock* instead of \$1,000 in cash. Even though Mr. Jones may have only paid \$100 for the stock when he bought it 20 years ago, he gets full \$1,000 income tax deduction when he makes the gift. AND he does not have to pay capital gains tax on the \$900 gain. In addition, by making the gift of stock, Mr. Jones has not directly reduced his disposable income, and he has saved \$610 in federal and California income taxes, assuming he is in the 50% income tax bracket.

Robert L. Hobson is an attorney who has practiced in the area of taxation and estate planning. He is currently vice president for Bank of America and is the national director for the bank's Endowment and Charitable Trust Services.

It is this concept of giving *assets* which leads us directly to DEFERRED charitable giving. In its essence, a deferred gift is one where the donor transfers assets (or money) to a charity, but keeps the *income produced* by that gift for the rest of his or her life. The gift is now, and it is irrevocable (otherwise there would be no income tax deduction), but the benefit to charity is delayed for the lifetime of the donor.

The basic benefits to an individual who makes a deferred gift of assets (stock, for example) are:

-
1. Donor *keeps the income* for the rest of his or her life.
 2. Donor gets an immediate *income tax saving*.
 3. Donor *avoids capital gains tax*.
 4. Donor will usually *increase* his or her *income* for life.
 5. Donor will *reduce or eliminate* federal *estate taxes* and *probate expenses*.
 6. And donor will provide a very substantial long term *benefit* for his or her favorite charity.
-

Let's look a little closer at Mr. Jones and see just how this deferred giving will provide all those benefits to him compared to his next door neighbor, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones are each 65 years old, each is married and their wives are each 63 years old. They are both in the 50% income tax bracket and they both own \$25,000 worth of ABC stock which each purchased 20 years ago for \$2,500. ABC stock currently pays a dividend of 3%, so both Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones receive a dividend of \$750 per year from the ABC investment.

Smith and Jones are both good businessmen and believe they can do much better than a 3% return in today's market. So, Mr. Smith decides to sell his stock and reinvest the proceeds of the sale in a deal he has found which will pay him 10%. Here is what happens when Smith sells and reinvests:

-
- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. He incurs a federal and California capital gains tax of | \$5,737 |
| 2. Subtracted from his \$25,000 sales price of the ABC stock, he has left to reinvest | \$19,263 |
| 3. Invested at 10%, this returns to Smith each year | \$1,926 |
| 4. He was earning from the ABC stock | \$750 |
| 5. So he has increased his income by | \$1,176 |
-

The life expectancy of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, taken from life insurance tables, is approximately 20 years. So, when you multiply the additional income of \$1,176 by their life expectancy, Mr. and Mrs. Smith have come out ahead by \$23,520. Not too bad a business decision by Mr. Smith, but Mr. Jones has another idea.

Jones decides to make a deferred gift of his stock, and here is what happens to the Joneses:

-
- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. After the gift, the ABC stock is sold for | \$25,000 |
| 2. But, there is no capital gains tax | - 0 |
| 3. So all the proceeds of sale are reinvested | \$25,000 |
| 4. Jones gets the same 10% return Smith got. | 10% |
| 5. But, Jones will get each year | \$2,500 |
| 6. He was earning from the ABC stock | \$750 |
| 7. So Jones income increase is | \$1,750 |
-

The life expectancy of Mr. and Mrs. Jones is also 20 years, so when the Joneses' additional income is projected for 20 years, they come out \$35,000 better off.

But the story is not finished here. In addition to the increased income for the rest of their lives, the Joneses get an income tax deduction which saves them \$5,152 in federal and California taxes, and they save \$12,750 in federal estate taxes (50% bracket) and probate expenses.



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In summary, the Joneses' benefits from making the deferred gift are:

1. Additional income	\$35,000
2. Income tax saving	5,152
3. Estate tax and probate saving	12,750
	\$52,902

In addition, they avoided \$5,737 of capital gains tax and provided a gift of \$25,000 to a favorite charity.

It appears that both Jones and Smith were receiving 10% on their new investments. But on closer analysis, we see that Smith is only earning \$1,926 based on the investment of proceeds left after capital gains tax. That is a return of only 7.7% on the \$25,000 value of the ABC stock which Smith sold. Jones, on the other hand, got a tax deduction of \$5,152 from his \$25,000 gift. This makes the net cost of that gift to him only \$19,848 (\$25,000-\$5,152) and the rate of return for his \$2,500 income based on net cost is really 12.6%.

To be sure, the Joneses did give away \$25,000. But this was a deferred gift, and the benefits they received for the gift totalled \$52,902. It sounds like they made money by giving something away. In fact, they more than doubled their money while giving \$25,000 to their favorite charity.

The Smith-Jones illustration is hypothetical, but the results do graphically show that, when properly planned and executed, a deferred gift can provide many benefits to the donor and the donor's favorite charity. Deferred giving is properly one vital tool in estate- and tax-planning, but is often overlooked because it involves giving something away. Mr. Jones has proved, however, that you can make more money by giving something away—if your gift is properly planned. Perhaps we have a new meaning for the term "keeping up with the Joneses." □

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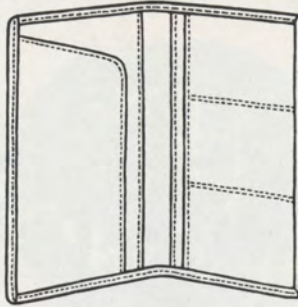
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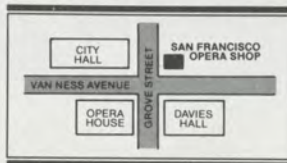
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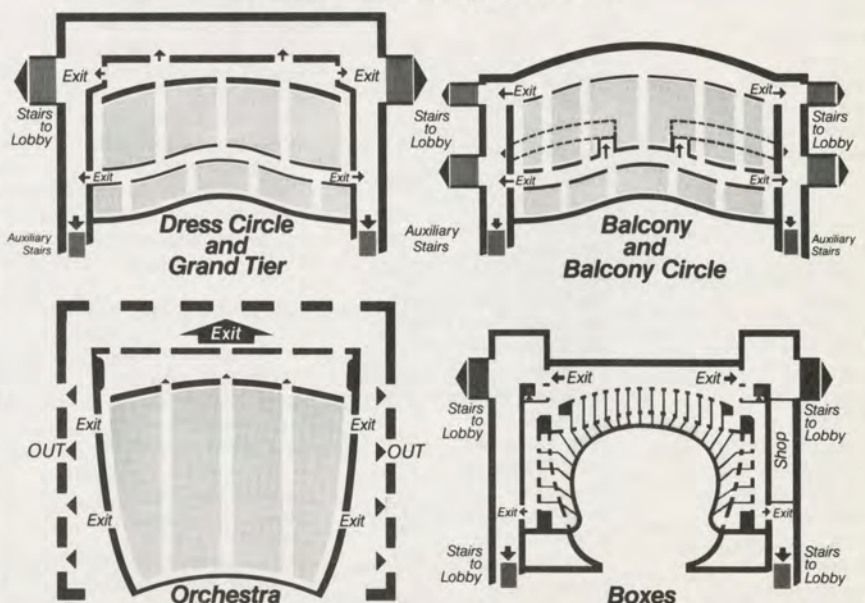
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